METRO / A17
All dogs (and cats) go to heaven in style in this pet memorial

BUSINESS / B1
Forex reserves seen at $31B by yearend

WORLD / A19
21 convicted of Madrid train bombings; alleged mastermind acquitted

SPORTS / A21
Harry Tañamor survives Tajik boxer, makes it to Beijing Olympics

Relatives remember 800 victims of political slays

Court resurrects 'dead' husband, chides wife

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Friday, November 2, 2007 | 44 | 19 sections | Vol. 23 | No. 327 | P18

Oil hits record $96/barrel

Price seen spiking to $100 due to low supplies, weak dollar

MANILA NORTH CEMETERY
Former President Estrada waves to supporters shortly after visiting the tomb of his former friend, Fernando Poe Jr., at the Manila North Cemetery on Wednesday night. Last night he visited the grave of his father at San Juan Cemetery.

LIBINGANG NG MGA BAYANI
President Arroyo holds a candle before the tomb of her father, former President Diosdado Macapagal, at the Libingan ng mga Bayani in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, on Thursday.

SINGAPORE—THE PRICE OF oil rose to a new record above US$96 a barrel on Thursday after a surprise drop in US crude stockpiles raised concerns about supplies for the coming winter demand.

A further weakening of the US dollar as a result of the Federal Reserve's move to cut interest rates by a quarter point and data showing strong US consumer growth also contributed to the oil price spike.

Analysts said they didn't see anything standing in the way of a run to US$100 per barrel after the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) continued to stay coy on any move on production. Opec said the existing market was beyond its control, with the cartel blaming speculators and politics for the surge in price.

A senior Asian Development Bank official yesterday said the cost of fuel in Asia may still outstrip profits, but he warned that further rises in oil prices could pose a threat to the region's economies, including the Philippines. (For story see Page A6.)

"The decline in US crude oil inventories has been a key driver of oil prices," said David Moore, commodity strategist ... OIL HITS $96

Kin of blast victims plan to meet, swap stories

By DJ Yap and Julie M. Aurelio

IF THE DEAD HAVE SOULS, THEY should be celebrating all corners on a silent communion.

Cadio Cruz does not know for sure. But in this season of remembering the departed, he is missing a week to connect with others like himself who lost loved ones in the explosion at Glorietta 2 on Oct. 28.

"What will I say to them? I don't know. I have no words. I don't have any consolation," said Cadio, 31, whose wife Marie Grisele ("Leslie") was among the 11 persons killed in the explosion.

"All I know is that we're in this together. We've all lost together by this incident," he said.

Marie de Jesus, who lost her husband Jose Allan, has likewise thought of touching base with the other grieving families.

"I want to meet them. Maybe we can talk, share our experience, and share our plans for the future," said the 38-year-old mother of three.

Annette de Grazia has been occupied with the arrangements for her daughter Jet-Ann's funeral, but she wants to meet and talk with the other families, especially those of Jet-Ann's four friends who also died in the blast—three were in love and Mitz Palanca.

"I want us to get together. I wish for justice for us, and government assistance if indeed negligence is the cause of the explosion," Annette said, adding:

"We need to talk, all of us who are bereaved. We want a place where we can light candles, where we can offer flowers."

For Cadio Cruz, one way to begin [illegible] e-mail or the phone—will do.

"This is a very difficult time for all of us. We're going through the same thing, so I won't imagine what it must be like for Dean," he said.

Then he asked the bereaved: "How are they?"

From yesterday, they are finding ...

No neighbors at Erap marble tomb in Tanay

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE VOW JOSEPH ESTRADA TELLS E. he has found the perfect place to spend eternity—his sprawling vacation estate in Tanay, Rizal, which he described as being "nearest to heaven."

During his three-year detention at the 15-hectare property, the ousted President had pondered plans he made ready for his rest from this world. The result of his efforts is a mausoleum with the color of earth, standing on a spot that he himself selected.

Barangay justice eases court load

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE CASE THAT REACHED Alice Dana Kraus was similar to many minor domestic problems that invariably reach the courts, clogging dockets, delaying the resolution of cases and, worse, keeping those awaiting their fate in jail for prolonged periods.

A woman had complained to officials of Barangay Tumana in Marikina where she lives that her estranged husband had not provided child support since their separation.

Kraus, the barangay chairperson, heard the two sides and gave them two months to settle their personal issues, which they did without incurring the usual high cost of litigation if it were brought to court.

Increasingly, paralegal rules ...

Magistrates on buses hear cases of poor litigants

By Margaux C. Deiz
Special to the Inquirer

TEAM Report
Fernando del Mundo
Chief

AFTER ALMOST TWO YEARS, former Gobyang finally got his day. But from four neighborhood things rules have been up and made P200 from fines on his own house to redeliver Cholas.

A man in the restroom at a shop in Cainguin, Bulacan, he had filed a case of robbery with physical injuries against the man, spending previous hours and losing money each time a hearing was scheduled in the municipal court of Barlan, Bulacan, where he lived.

"The case had been dragging on for so long," says Gobyang. He had been shelling out the P-the he earned to pursue the case until he heard of a Supreme Court program called "Justice on Wheels" (JOW).

The high tribunal had launched the program in 2004 to speed up the resolution of cases, especially those involving impoverished litigants, and in the process address the dilemma of "justice delayed, justice denied" with the serious backlog of court cases.

"The present and judge of Trial Court ... [illegible] ... who helped us understand that our case could take years to resolve if I did not try to talk and settle things with the man who beat me," Gobyang explains.

The proceedings were held on a special vehicle—one of three ...

FILE photo shows the rolled-on Rep. Ramon Jalosjos to the NBP maximum security unit. At right is former NBP Supt. Gregorio Rigor Jr.

Muntinlupa a paradise compared to cramped city jails

By Jocelyn R. Uy

IF NOT FOR THE HEAVY IRON grills, the crowded conditions and a complete scandal pass off as a small village run by filthy entrepreneurs.

At the center of the New Bilibid Prisons' maximum security compound is an "International Park" with food stalls, an electronic repair shop, a mini-hardware store and little shops here [illegible] to assist [illegible] during their most hectic hours.

A playground is a modern event, which has also become the perfect spot for [illegible] ...

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

EZ2 SIX DIGIT

SUERTRES

SUPERLOTTO 6/49

P57,171,898.80

Older cons owe Erap

AFTER PRESIDENT MACA-pagal-kirot-tiod convicted plunderer Joseph Estrada (No) ago is a factor in pressuring the deposed president, the Department of Justice has begun working for the release of prisoners 70 years and older.

The DOJ is also set to release prisoners who were 16 years old and younger when they committed the crimes that landed them in jail.

Acting Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera has directed the Bureau of Corrections to transmit to the Board of Pardons and Parole the records of these inmates "to effect their immediate release from confinement."

Estrada, 70, was pardoned by Ms Arroyo last month, after the Supreme Court convicted him of plunder in September.

Her pardon sparked calls for Arroyo to do other inmates in their 70s.

Leila B. Salaverria

Comelec appointee opposed

Lacson says new commissioner has links to 'Garci'

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S NEW MUSlim appointee to the Commission on Elections is "a known Garci protege and operator," according to opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who said he would oppose Moslemen Macarambon's appointment in the congressional Commission on Appointments.

Lacson declared in a floor "whistle-blowing" that Hadji Gaviden, the former election commissioner who figured in the 2004 "Hello Garci" poll fraud scandal, had recommended Macarambon to the President.

The appointment of Macarambon, 69—a regional trial court judge in the Presidential Security Command—was also figured in the controversial NPC transfers in Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Misamis City, Cagayan de Oro and Iligan City.

In 2005, he was cited in one of the 13 outstanding RTC judges by the Philippine Trial Lawyers Association.

"With no vast experience as a regional trial court judge handling election cases, I believe that I can help in the early disposition of cases at the Comelec," he said.

Macarambon's appointment was welcomed in Iligan City where he has served as the regular presiding judge of Regional Trial Court Branch 4 since 2000. He was appointed to the position by Ms Arroyo.

Abingaen Mangansi, director of the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Extension at Mindanao State University-IIT, described Macarambon as a "simple, straightforward, mass-oriented guy."

Macarambon has been a judge since 1989 presiding over several RTC branches in Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Misamis City, Cagayan de Oro and Iligan City.

In 1997, he was cited in one of the 13 outstanding RTC judges by the Philippine Trial Lawyers Association.

A law graduate of Manuel L. Quezon University and University of the East, Macarambon worked for various government agencies and private firms, including the Department of Agrarian Reform, as an executive assistant in the office of former Sen. Mamintal Tamano and in the Interim Batasang Pambansa from 1980to 1986.

He was a managing partner at the Tamano and Associates law office from 1981 to 1988.

Macarambon also sought political ties at the MSU College of Law Extension in Iligan City and was known among his classmates as an advocate for fraternity and equity.

Commissioner Rosemary Edwards-Lantin shrugged off reports that some opposition senators were planning to block Macarambon's appointment at the CA, saying that this was to be expected.

"His appointment is just only a good representation for our Muslim brothers," he said.

Lacson, who is said to be gunning for the presidency in 2010, said he would block Macarambon's appointment by asking other CA members to reject the appointment or by insisting for at least 20 of the CA's elite while all of him any CA members to respond action on any appointment.

Macarambon's appointment will leave three seats vacant to fill at the Comelec.

The head of the Public Attorney's Office (PAO) Persida Acosta to sign the shortlist of nominees that the Philippine Judicial Council for Responsible Voting (PJCRV) plans to recommend to Malacañang.

PCIJ chair Rosanna de Villa, in told Acosta was being considered because of her track record at PAO.

De Villa said the most important consideration was unconditional integrity. **Dona Pazzibugan, Delon Porcalla, Jerry Esplanada, Dave Veloso, Rey Arguelles and Charlie Avilano, Inquirer Mindanao, with a report from Artjoe de la Cruz**

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Anger over Estrada pardon growing – in cyberspace

By Tj Burgonio

IT IS HARDLY VISIBLE IN THE streets, but the scrappy-over Pardon Machiavelli Arroyo's pardon of convicted plunderer Joseph Estrada is increasingly growing in cyberspace.

Indignation is spreading in e-mail exchanges, letters to online papers, blogs and chatrooms.

A call for a protest rally at Philippine consulates abroad is being expressed online.

The outrage is directed not only at Ms Arroyo's hasty grant of executive clemency but also at Estrada's quick acceptance of it without any expression of guilt or remorse.

"The issue today is not Erap's guilt or innocence," said Fernando Hermosa, former president of the University of the Philippines, in an e-mail to the national council of Lorna ng Mass.

"The Sandiganbayan decision did not and could not have rendered it because the credibility of that institution as a pillar of justice is itself in grave doubt," he said. "The issue is the meaning of his pardon by a hopia President."

Hermosa said that Estrada could have "emerged a hero" had he stuck to his stand against a pardon, or could have at least retained a measure of empathy had he accepted it "just to be safe in ailing mother."

"Unfortunately, he went westbound in espousing his gratitude to GMA, to the extent of helping a sworn enemy survive the current crisis. He should have the political will for national unity and even pledged support for her administration's agenda," he said.

The President pardoned Estrada on Oct. 26 in what both camps claimed was a step toward national reconciliation, months after the court of leader was convicted of plunder by the Sandiganbayan.

Following Ms Arroyo's move, Estrada distanced himself from opposition calls for Ms Arroyo's resignation sparked by a series of corruption scandals, including allegations of corruption and his links to a broadband deal with China and payoffs to politicians purportedly to stave off another impeachment attempt.

Estrada was ousted in January 2001 in a People Power revolt after a failed impeachment trial on corruption charges.

In an e-mailed statement to newspapers and friends, the lonesome Tet Duldao to Asian Church and Culture slammed the pardon as "cheap grace."

"Forgive Romanos, who ran an online protest against corruption in the Estrada administration, said: 'I don't think you will see people go out in the street on their own. I don't think it will be organized as rallies; it will be as texting.'

The sudden shift in mood from indifference to fury has been particularly "discernible" among the middle class and the elite, Romano said.

"Now that the argument is done, and Estrada's camp is with GMA, these people are more willing to come out. What earned us happiness is a build-up of activities," he said.

Romano himself is organizing synchronized protests on Ayala Avenue in Makati City and at all Philippine consulates abroad on Friday next week. Enough for anymuch of an election marches in Mendiguiza.

Also protesting Sen. Jinggoy Estrada said he was planning to seek an audience with President Arroyo to personally thank her for the pardon granted to his father.

"Because any grandmother that (sic) is not critical condition, Ms Arroyo probably thought that my dad should be in the bedside of my grandmother. And in fact I believe that GMA knows that Erap did not need anyone from the government," Estrada said. **With reports from Bill G. Cabacungan Jr.**

SUPER TOON. The Super hogs 1.5-cosic strip will appear in the Junior Inquirer with an interactive content and a premium for readers, after a contract signing on Wednesday between the Philippine Daily Inquirer and ABS-CBN. Neighbors are, seated from left, Jocel Adobado, PDI AVP for marketing; actor Carlos Agassi and Rubirosa Barcarolo; Malaking Morales, star of "Super Inggo," and Raymund Sison of ABS-CBN. Standing are, from left, Ruth Navarro, Junior Inquirer; Lorie Dionisio and Nora Nicolas, ABS-CBN; Brian Lesaq, Junior Inquirer; Jenny Rockwell, PDI account executive; Liz Mariola, Junior Inquirer; Claire San Miguel, PDI marketing officer, and Ervin Morallo and Cheryl Recio, ABS-CBN.

Global warming threatens coral reefs, says expert

By TJ Burgonio

THE CORALS OFF LUZON'S western coast have been hit by bleaching, which was first recorded there a marine biologist warned yesterday.

And the bleaching could occur over the coming years because of global warming, said Edgardo Gomez, professor emeritus at the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute (UPMSI).

"There was bleaching in [areas of the high temperatures and high light intensity," Gomez said in an interview. "It's global warming. That's the effect. It's becoming more frequent."

The water temperatures in the South China Sea in June and July caused the corals to bleach in the waters off Bolinao in northern Luzon and Subic and Batangas in Southern Tagalog, he said.

During those months, the sea temperature reached 32 degrees Centigrade, bleaching the corals where the extended period of high temperature could kill the corals, Gomez said.

"The (bleaching) now occur every year because of global warming. The seas are getting warmer. Global warming is a real thing," he said.

Gomez also chairs the Southeast Asian Center of Excellence at MSI, one of several think tanks established by the Coral Reef Targeted Research and Capacity Building for Management (CRTR) Program to do further research on coral reefs.

The CRTR program is a partnership among the Global Environment Facility, World Bank, University of Queensland, US National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration and 40 other institutions.

But unlike the coral bleaching that occurred in the late 1990s, the recent incident was mild, according to Gomez.

"It was not as bleached as in 1998. Certain species bleached, while others did not," Gomez said during a PowerPoint presentation of his paper titled "An Overview of Coral Reefs."

Gomez made the presentation during an open forum on CRTR at the MSI in UP Diliman.

In 1997 and 1998, massive bleaching hit the coral reefs in Maldives, Zanzibar, Belize, Patagonia, Brazil, Fiji, Kiribati and Cocos islands in Polynesia and Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro.

'Atong' insists on trip

CHARLIE "ATONG" ANG, 100 gambling tycoon, hopes to travel to Cambodia where a former consultancy awaits him.

Before the midnight court closed for the long weekend on Wednesday, Ang filed a petition asking the Special Division to resolve the motion he reconsideration he filed on Sept. 12 seeking a reversal of the ruling barring him from making the Cambodia trip.

Ang, through lawyer Ruby Corales, said that reason he wanted the job was to be able to settle the debts he incurred to pay the P20 million civil forfeiture in the court imposed on him after he pleaded guilty to a lesser offense in the plunder case in which he was a contracted witness against President Joseph Estrada.

Ang said his creditors were pressuring lawsuits against him for his failure to pay them since the court confiscated him to six years for indirect bribery and ordered him to pay the government P20 million in March.

The court, however, advised Ang not to participate in any form of consultancy as it would put him on probation. Jonathan B. Oy

WILCON BUILDERS DEPOT

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No neighbors at Erap's marble tomb

From page A1

"I have already prepared my final resting place to spare my family and relatives arguments about where I should be buried," Estrada yesterday told the Inquirer on the phone.

While other famous personalities aspire to be laid to rest in Libingan ng mga Bayani—the cemetery of heroes—ex-other historic sites, Citizen Erap, 70, wants a piece of his own.

He has not changed his mind even now that he is back in his residence on Polk Street, Greenhills, in the family bailiwick of San Juan City.

"I want to be in a solemn place where one can meditate. Ayaw ko ng kapitbahay (I don't want any neighbors)," he said with a chuckle.

Surrounded by trees

Completed early last year, Estrada's tomb is surrounded by a profusion of trees. It stands against a bleached wall bearing his carved likeness and a line from a speech that he delivered as a senator, in protest of the then US military bases in Pampanga and Zambales.

The line, engraved in gold letters, reads: "Walang sunalang an Pilipino kung hindi kapwa Pilipino (No one will help the Filipino except his fellow Filipino)."

"I chose that line because I want Filipinos to remember that we should all be self-supporting, and that we should learn to rely on our own," said the man who won the 1998 presidential election with the slogan "Erap para sa mahirap (Erap for the poor)."

Answered prayers

Next to the tomb shaded by a balete tree is a rock where, by his account, Estrada spent many moments in prayer as an observer his prayer to the throne, a certified citizen idol, and eventually as a mayor, senator, vice president, president—and a prisoner.

"That is the place where God heard all my prayers. I prayed in the past that I become a movie star, and I did. I also prayed hard to become a senator, and I did ... The only thing I did not pray for was to end up a prisoner," Estrada said, still chuckling.

On Oct. 26, the convicted plunderer walked out of his executive estate a free man, after accepting executive clemency from President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The move stirred many, including a member of his assistance, who saw in it a capitulation to the woman whom he had accused of "unconstitutionally" taking his place after he was arrested from power by a military-backed uprising in January 2001. (See related story on Page A2.)

Peace and comfort

For more than two decades, the estate where his tomb now stands has given him peace and comfort, Estrada said.

But having regained his freedom after undergoing a corruption trial in a special court of the Sandiganbayan for six years—and being found guilty of two counts of plunder and sentenced to a lifetime prison term—he is not about to live quiet his Tuesday days just yet.

He plans to return to his old house sometime next week, however, to collect the personal belongings that had accumulated there in his three-year detention.

An aide and six helpers have been assigned to oversee operations at the estate—which includes, among other things, a farm and a private museum of his memorabilia from his days as a movie icon and political kingpin—and to keep his grounds spic-and-span.

"Of course, I haven't changed my mind," Estrada declared. "Even if I am now free, I still want to be buried there in Tanay, which is the highest point of blood and interest to heaven."

FOREVER President Joseph Estrada walks away from his future tomb inside his estate in Tanay, Rizal. (Photo was taken on the day he was granted what pardon by President Macapagal-Arroyo. [illegible])

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Corrections

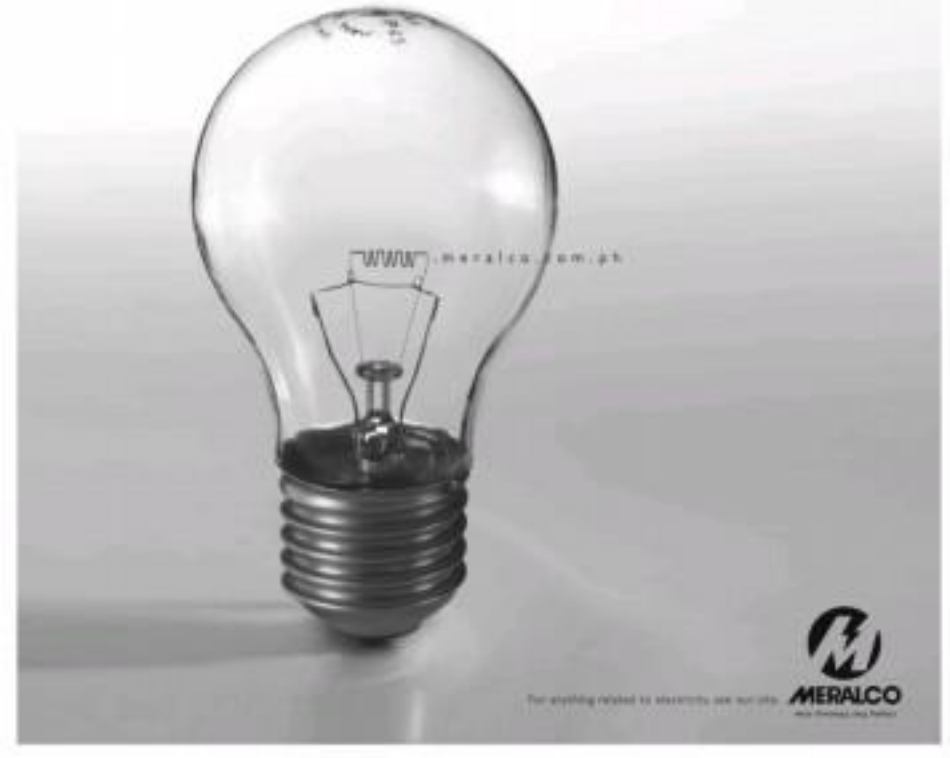
IN THE OCT. 28 ISSUE, a front-page story—"Iraq's first night at No. 1 Polk Street"—misstated the name of a former finance secretary. The former finance secretary is Jose Pardo—not Jose Pardo de Tavera.

* * *

IN THE NOV. 1 ISSUE, a front-page article misspelled the surname of the spokesperson of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. The CBCP spokesperson is Msgr. Felix Quitorio—not Quitorio.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a Page A2 caption misnamed the subjects to which the layer in the photograph belongs. In the photo was a Bangsi—not Bulgari—layer.



New nuncio lands in RP

ARCHBISHOP EDWARD JOSEPH Adams, newly appointed papal nuncio of the Holy See to the Philippines, arrived yesterday at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport to a red carpet welcome led by Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales.

Adams replaces Archbishop Fernando Filoni, who has assumed the third highest position in the Vatican, the Substitute for the General Affairs of the Secretariat State.

An American born in Philadelphia, the 63 year old archbishop studied for the diplomatic service at the Vatican in 1970, and has since served in several countries, including Denmark, the Czech Republic, Kenya, Rwanda, Honduras and Ireland.

His assignment to the Philippines follows a five-year stint as the Nuncio's ambassador to Zimbabwe. Adams is the 15th apostolic delegate to the Philippines.

Nestor Ejercito Mendoza

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, November 2, 2007
All Souls Day

1st Reading: Wis 3:1-9
2nd Reading: Rom 6:3-9
Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus said to his disciples, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory with all his angels, he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be brought before him, and as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, so will he do with them, placing the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

"The king will say to those on his right, 'Come, blessed of my Father! Take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me into your house, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you cared for me, I was in prison and you came to see me.'

"Then the righteous people will ask him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food, thirsty and give you drink, or a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to see you?' The king will answer, 'Truly I say to you: when ever you did this to these least ones who are my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.'

"Then he will say to those on his left 'Go, cursed people, out of my sight into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels! For I was hungry and you did not give me anything to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me into your house; I was naked and you did not clothe me; I was sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

"Then, too, will ask 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, thirsty, naked or a stranger, sick or in prison, and did not help you?' The king will answer them: 'Truly, I say to you, whatever you did not do for one of these little ones, you did not do for me.'

"And these will go into eternal punishment, but the just to eternal life."

Commentary

Our souls live in hope and we believe that one day we will shine like sparks that set incle stubble and that it is the just who will one day govern and rule, and more importantly, if we trust in God we will preserve our truth and love with God in love because of God's mercy. We then be baptized into the dying and rising of Jesus and our redemption how begun. Our lives are a preface for the fullness of glory with God. This is the foundation of our religion and all our lives' practice and prayer. We will all die, but we make our lives on the hope that the first of Mass will come in glory to judge and govern and all the nations and thus there will be life everlasting. And today we pray for all those who have gone before us in faith. And we pray that they who know more than we do now of God's presence will remember us before God, too.

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Soaring oil prices a long-term threat to Asia, says ADB

TOKYO—SEVERE INFLATION in emerging countries in Asia is still manageable but further rises in oil prices would pose a long-term threat to the region's economies, a senior Asian Development Bank official pointed out.

"Obviously the increase in oil prices is a big challenge," Song Won Lee, head of the ADB's Regional Economic Integration told Reuters in an interview.

Oil prices scaled record highs above $96 a barrel on Thursday, while China unexpectedly raised domestic gasoline and diesel prices by 10 percent, the first increase in 17 months.

According to an ADB estimate, a $10 rise in oil prices would slash growth rates for emerging Asian countries, big importers of oil, by 0.6 percentage point.

But Lee said the impact of rising oil prices on economic growth in emerging Asian countries had been limited so far thanks to recent efforts to promote energy efficiency and other ways to cope with rising energy prices.

"The question is inflation," Lee said, noting China's recently high inflation rate of roughly 7 percent is "very high."

"Inflation rate is still manageable but if oil prices keep rising, it will clearly be a long-term threat and risk, not just for individual but also for the real economy," he added.

Lee said there was no need to exaggerate such risk and added that the ADB still expected the economic growth of Asia's emerging economies to remain robust this year and next.

The Manila-based multilateral agency forecast in September that Asia's developing economies, the fastest growing economies in the world, would expand 6.3 percent this year and 6.2 percent in 2008. Reuters

NEW PAPAL NUNCIO Newly appointed Papal Nuncio to the Philippines Archbishop Edward Joseph Adams is welcomed by Filipino bishops upon his arrival at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport on Thursday. (Story on Page A5.) JOY NOVO

Oil hits record $96/barrel

From page A1

gist at Commonwealth Bank of Australia in Sydney.

Light, sweet crude for December delivery rose as high as US$96.24 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange by midafternoon in Singapore before dropping to US$95.58 a barrel.

Crude prices have surged more than 30 percent since the start of the year, and have risen about 18 percent in the past month alone on winter supply worries, speculative buying and a succession of record lows in the US dollar.

"We are stepping into an unknown area. Nobody wants to sell (given the fear of) further rise," broker Ben Hanojaya of Prime Japan told Reuters in Singapore.

Fall of oil supplies

In its weekly inventory report, the US Energy Information Administration (EIA) said supplies fell by 5.9 million barrels last week. Analysts surveyed by Dow Jones Newswires, on average, had expected an increase of 1.00,000 barrels.

"The US inventory report has reaffirmed the belief that market conditions are tightening and oil prices are trekking up higher on that basis," Moses said.

Much of that decline in inventories was due to a big drop in crude supplies at a closely watched oil terminal in Cushing, Oklahoma.

Cushing oil supplies have been under pressure in recent months due to differences in the price between front-month oil contracts and those for delivery in future months. This price differences, or spread, has given storage tank owners a financial incentive to sell their oil, rather than hold it in inventory.

Analysts have also blamed Hurricane Dean, which struck Jamaica, for the rally in which oil prices have jumped 25 percent since August.

The EIA also reported that refinery activity fell by 0.8 percentage point last week to 86.2 percent of capacity. Analysts had supported an increase of 0.1 percentage point.

Supplies of gasoline rose last week by 1.3 million barrels, analysts expected a 400,000-barrel decrease.

Total inventories of distillates, which include heating oil and diesel fuel, rose by only 800,000 barrels. Analysts had expected a 1-million barrel decrease.

Rate cut; GDP growth

The US Federal Reserve's move to cut interest rates by a quarter point also supported prices. Interest rate cuts generally support oil prices because they tend to send the US dollar downward; the dollar is already at multiple-decade lows against major currencies.

The Fed's second interest rate cut to stave off fears of inflation has added liquidity to financial markets, most of which has been plowed into oil futures because they offer a hedge against a weak dollar.

Further so, the economy of the world's biggest energy consumer has shown surprising resilience in high oil prices. Gross domestic product (GDP) expanded at a 3.9 percent annual rate last quarter, the quickest pace since the first quarter of 2006. Labor data also showed private employers added 166,000 jobs in October, beating economists' forecast of 60,000 new jobs.

No shortage, says Opec

Despite record oil prices, Opec ruled a deal out to calls for an increase in oil production.

"The question is if there is any shortage in the supply. There is none ... shortage in crude oil," Qatar Oil Minister abdullah al-Attiyah told reporters in Tokyo on Thursday.

"It's market-driven and the market is out of our control," he said, reiterating comments made earlier this week.

The Opec cartel's acting oil minister said the Opec was not expected to discuss raising output at informal talks in Ranchi in mid-November.

"I doubt that because there is enough oil in the market . . . Iran does not see a need for an output increase," Iran's Gholamhossein Nozari told Reuters, when asked if the Opec would discuss increasing production in the Saudi capital.

Geopolitical tensions are likewise fueling prices, with the objective of US$100 per barrel.

Iran warned the United States on Wednesday it would find itself in a "quagmire deeper than Iraq" if it attacked the Islamic state. Russia, however, has stepped up efforts for a diplomatic solution to Tehran's nuclear row with the West.

"It's just a matter of time . . . Everything you see now are bullish factors, so there is no reason for you to sell at the moment," Fimat's Jaques Rousseau said. Reporters from AFP and Reuters

Relatives remember 800 victims of political slays

From page A6

Tagaday (Bayan-AT), said the relatives, together with the human rights group Karapatan, Bayan and other groups in the region, visited and prayed over the graves of the victims.

In a statement, Alberto said the group first visited the cemetery in Columbia City where Bob Capulong, the regional leader of Bayan and Bayan Muna, is buried. He was assassinated in May 2006.

"What happened to my best friend is extremely painful because he did nothing wrong. Why did they kill my husband?" Capulong's widow Gwyn was quoted as saying.

The militants then visited the cemetery in Ilog Lagtang, where Sonny Malalum, a Bayan Muna leader, is buried. He was killed in December 2003.

Alberto, whose journey to public prominence as the wife of victims of summary executions in April 2002 in Dinalupihan, Bataan, said the group also visited the graves of other assassinated human rights leaders.

Among them were those of Edsa Shrine Bata, former secretary general of Karapatan; Eli Eddie Guinsatao, a former leader, and Gumercindo "Ging" Parreno, a regional labor leader and secretary general of Southern Cebu peasant-employees group.

Mass for the martyred

The group sponsored a Mass for the martyred activists and held top executives which called for the ouster of President Macapagal-Arroyo, when they blamed for the murder of their loved ones and comrades.

Alberto said the group was doing this every year to pay their respects for the greatness of the martyrs, "because they stood for the defense of the basic rights of the greater majority."

"It is here (Laguna) that I will be doing my prayers for my murdered parents' security reasons because from the time that my parents were killed, I have learned that I, too, am on the 'order of battle' of the military," he said.

Bitterness

The movement spared Dante Ducats, head of Karapatan-Southern Tagalog, in complaining that everytime her colleagues visited the graves of the fallen activists, they could not control their sorrow and feeling of bitterness because up to now justice had not been given the victims, instead, more and more of the activists are being summarily killed.

"But we still and stop protesting the deaths of our members until the Arroyos has been made to answer for the extrajudicial killings," Ducats said.

On All Souls' Day, militant groups mass the dead and the rich for the week's work together in naming the President.

Invoking spirits

The peasant group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas called on the spirits of the victims of extrajudicial killings to "vouch" Ms. Arroyo so that justice would be achieved.

Inday Espinosa, secretary general of Gabriela, a women's group, said it is "ridiculous" that Ms. Arroyo is still in power "when she is the one responsible for the killings of activists."

Kin of blast victims plan to meet, swap stories

From page A1

ways to cope with their personal loss and to get on with living.

Imelda Perez, a born-again pastor, is trying to ensure the education of her two grandchildren—Rica Mae, 9, and Elizabeth, 6—"even with their father gone."

Sister Isaya Isa nee Escandia ("Packy") to run at Heritage Park in Taguig City, the father but been sleeping in his car's bed and wearing his son's clothes.

"I miss his presence so much," said Amanda, 54. "If he shows himself to me, I will hug him tight and say, 'I love you, amah.'"

No visit to his grave

In these days of remembering, neither flowers nor lighted candles will mark Jose Allen's grave at the Manila Memorial Park in Parañaque City, said Maricel Isa, sister.

She said Jose finally believed in the superstition that visiting the departed within 40 days of their death could bring misfortune or cause hell behind.

Almost more than that, Marie said, she could not stand the atmosphere of death with the memory of her husband's passing on Feeb. "I don't want to remember anymore.

"I see flashes of him everywhere. When I'm in the house, I see his clothes, his slippers. When I prepare the table, when we're eating, all I see (him of is, he's not here."

There will not be a reunion as the family and acquaintance Marie said. They will light candles in the apartments, and say prayers for Jose Allen's soul.

In Cacho's case, the reality of Lorlie's passing "hasn't sunk in yet."

"It's been what, two-and-a-half weeks, yet I have no sense of time. I'm not planning anything beyond Nov. 1," he said.

The day was spent with his year-old daughter Ardee at Lorlie's grave at the Manila Memorial Park in Marikina City.

"I want to be with her," Carlo said, adding that for the past few days, he had been "talking" to Lorlie as though she were still around.

He visited the blast site at Glorietta 2 to pray for Lorlie last week, but he could not bring himself to go to the mall itself.

Reunion

"Not because I'm scared of what may happen," he said. "It's just that every everywhere, there is a memory of her. Glorietta was our 'gimmick place.' That was where we had our first date."

Then, I would have been an opportunity for Jeanette de Gracia to have a reunion with her children whose she had not seen for a year.

Nearly a month ago, Joe Ann, a computer programmer, was in Bahrain with her family and another Marie said. They will light candles in the apartments, and say prayers for Jose Allen's soul.

In the good old days, it was the custom of family members to go home to the provinces on All Saints' Day to pay their respects to the dead and reunite with relatives they had not seen for a while.

But since she parted ways with her husband two years ago, Jeanette said, she had not been able to go back to her home in Sta Cruz, Manila.

Jeanette's reunion with her other kids—Jojo, Jennely and Jeffrey—was inevitably somber. Nevertheless, she expressed gratitude that she was able to had how much they loved her.

The mother said it was the three other children who told her of Joe Ann's death, and how, on Joe Ann's last day with her siblings, she was scheduled over a consulting job offer in Singapore.

At Melanie Arroyo's house in Villamor Air Base, Pasay City, a flower vase would sometimes topple over and an unseen hand had playfully nudged it.

Not done mourning

Melanie, whose husband Antonio was joined to death in the explosion, said she viewed such incidents as her way of telling her that he was still around.

"With every move I make in the house, I see my husband," she said. "It's so difficult to accept his death... we're not yet done mourning."

Anthony, a woman, would have left for Germany on Oct. 28. Husband and wife were doing last-minute shopping for his trip when the explosion occurred.

To ease her grief, the young wife sought comfort in her new friends, who remarked how strong she was despite her loss.

"I have to be strong, Melanie said. "I can't deal with that alone. And I don't want my children to see me hollow inside. Can't stop crying. My children get even stronger from me."

On their bed made for two, Melanie once sensed what seemed like arms wrapped around her, as if telling her to sleep.

"I know it was him," she said, recalling no fear in Anthony's farewell embrace.

A HAPPY HAM of the late Fernando Poe Jr. places flowers at the tomb of the actor in Manila's North Cemetery.

RELATIVES pay their respects to their departed loved ones on All Saints' Day at the Baguio Cemetery in Mankhna City.

Court resurrects 'dead' husband

From page A6

presumptively dead upon the plea of his wife who had said her husband had stopped communicating with her and their children for almost 10 years.

The Lagayan City Regional Trial Court (RTC) declared Elbert Corcuera presumptively dead in January 2000 as provided for under the Family Code, and allowed his wife Alicia Corcuera to marry again.

Alicia and Elbert were married in 1978 and had two children. Elbert left the conjugal home in Manila in 1982, and his said children testified that her husband, pursuing on that she did not expect his disappearance to the police or media and did not seek their help in searching for Elbert.

Living with another woman

The appellate court said Alicia failed to diligently search for her missing spouse and to show that she had enough basis to believe that Elbert was dead, as required by the Family Code. It also pointed out that evidence showed that Elbert was alive, although he was living with another woman.

"To the court at last, as aptly opined by the OSG, the search conducted by the appellee and the evidence she presented in support of her proposition proxy to be too sketchy to bolster a conclusion belief on her part that her husband is already dead," the Court of Appeals said in its decision on Oct. 19.

It said Alicia only searched for her husband immediately before and after filing her petition with the RTC, as shown by her inquiries with the Commission on Elections, a Manila barangay, the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the Bureau of Immigration, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the United States Embassy.

The appeals court said the documents that Alicia had gathered did not prove that Elbert was dead. The papers only showed that he was not a resident or a registered voter of Manila, he was not a taxpayer in the Philippine Census area, he did not have a passport and did not apply for a US visa, and he did not travel abroad.

Very much alive

The court also said that Alicia did not show proof that she had inquired about her husband's whereabouts from friends and the caretaker of her mother-in-law.

"What the evidence on record proves is that Elbert is very much alive and is now cohabiting with another woman (or it was actually the appellee who testified that her mother-in-law had informed her of such fact)," the Court of Appeals said.

It pointed out that based on Alicia's testimony, it appeared that her husband only chose not to communicate with her and their acquaintances.

In cases in which a spouse is declared presumptively dead, the other spouse should have a well-founded belief that her husband or his wife is dead before she petition is filed, according to the appellate court.

Protect marriage

Marriage is an important social institution that should be safeguarded, and the decision was pursued by Justice Josefina Guevara-Salonga.

Two justices of the five-member Special Division, however, dissented.

The appellate court has no jurisdiction over presumptive death rulings because these are immediately executory and could not be questioned through an ordinary appeal such as the one filed by the OSG, according to Justice Vicente Roxas.

A declaration of presumptive death does not restore a person's physically dead, Roxas said. Rather, a person is presumed to be dead, after it is determined that he has been missing for several years, so that his former spouse could go on with their lives.

Roxas said presumptive death petitions could not be questioned because of a lack of clear evidence of death and because presumption already indicated that there was a "dead" on how a person disappeared.

"The presumption of death is only a legal fiction such like many other legal concepts. Presumption of death cannot be construed so literally that one must have a corpse shifted or to be more blunt—a cadaver," he said.

Roxas said presumptive death rulings could only be brought to the appellate court on a different mode of appeal if the person declared presumptively dead had reappeared or if there was evidence to show he was actually alive.

He also said that petitions for declaration of presumptive death would lead to rulings of presumption and not conclusive determination. Hence, an appeal is inconvenient in finality because there is no concept of "finality in a presumption."

"By nature of a presumption, a presumption is 'necessarily disputable'...indefinitely. The reason why it is a presumption is because there is an uncertainty. It always remains doubtful. It always remains disputable and uncertain," he said.

Justices Myrna Dimaranan Vidal said the appellate court could not accept the ordinary appeal filed by the OSG because the RTC ruling was immediately final and executory as provided for under the Family Code, but she said the OSG could still file the proper mode of appeal.

INQUIRER

OPINION

Your opinion matters

Unpardoned

EDITORIAL

WHOSE WERE WE, BEFORE WE WERE INTERrupted by Malacañang's sudden but inevitable decision to pardon Joseph Estrada? The Palace bribery scandal had reached a new absurd turn. And the Speaker's controversial son and namesake had directly implicated the President and her even more controversial husband in alleged corruption.

When telecommunications businessman Jose de Venecia III first testified before the Senate about what he knew of the ZTE contract for the government's national broadband network project, he unabashedly referred to President Macapagal-Arroyo as "my president." It was an obvious attempt on his part to make a crucial distinction between the series of corrupt acts that he said tainted the ZTE deal beyond redemption and a kind of government he said did not know anything about it.

As it turns out, the "my president" ploy was also a subtle attempt to dissuade President Arroyo from moving against Speaker Jose de Venecia, her close ally and former running mate. The Speaker repeatedly defended his son's disclosure as the decision of an independent person; at the same time, he could not forbear to point out that the distinction his son made proved that he himself was not attacking the President.

The last time the younger De Venecia appeared before the Senate, however, the day the Estrada pardon was announced, the circumstances had drastically changed. Perhaps he felt that the Palace was moving to depose his father; perhaps he believed Malacañang could have done more to contain the threats he said his family had received. Whatever: He not only declined to call Ms Arroyo "my president" again; he accused her of encouraging corruption.

In truth, all he did was detail what Secretary Ronaldo Puno allegedly told him, about President Arroyo's alleged reply to his revelation that Benjamin Abalos, then the chair of the Commission on Elections, had offered him a P200-million bribe. According to the younger De Venecia, Puno told him that the President's initial reply was, "Why didn't you take it? Isn't he Filipino?"

To be sure, Puno has since vehemently denied telling him any such thing. And the younger De Venecia has had difficulty explaining to reporters why—having already known about this alleged response when he first testified in September—he still kept referring to Ms Arroyo as "my president" then. If true, wasn't the alleged response just as criminal on Sept. 18 as it was when he belatedly revealed it on Oct. 25? (Inconvenient questions like these make us wonder why Malacañang pressed the panic button that day and decided to announce Estrada's pardon.)

The younger De Venecia also implicated the President's husband, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, in the crooked ZTE deal—but again by relating what another person, this time the equally controversial businessman Ricky Razon, allegedly told him. Some $70 million was reserved for "Mike," he said, because Abalos had reapedly promised previously that amount to him.

Again, many questions are begging to be asked—and Malacañang would be foolish to believe the Estrada pardon will drive them all away.

Despite our reservations about the younger De Venecia's exposé-by-installment plan, enough reliable information is already available—above all, Abalos' documented participation, which is as inexplicable as it is reprehensible—to merit continuing the investigation.

By the same token, enough misinformation about the distribution of cash gifts in Malacañang has surfaced to support calls for a thorough and impartial probe. The latest and most ridiculous "explanation," offered by Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone and Palawan Gov. Joel Reyes, plumbs a new low. Apparently the money received by Parangpang Gov. Ed Panlilio and other governors came from the League of Provinces of the Philippines. Apparently, the LPP has a fund pooled from governors' contributions. And apparently, a poor province like Eastern Samar can afford to give cash gifts to the country's more developed provinces like Parangpang and Palawan.

Perhaps the emerging public consensus is wrong. Perhaps the Estrada pardon was rushed, not to deny the younger De Venecia's revelations the headlines, but to obfuscate the LPP explanation, which no sane person can accept. Even a shameless Malacañang was ashamed.

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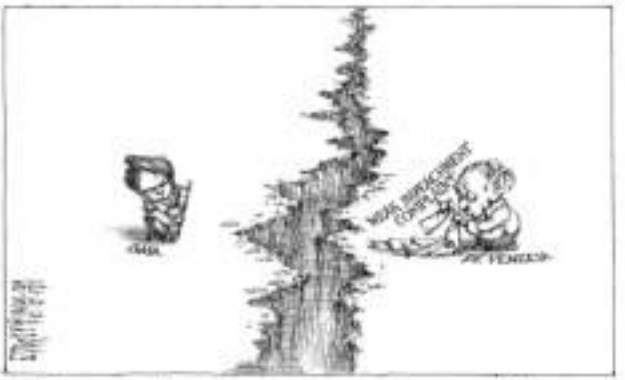

Too many lawyers cause too many problems

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

I asked that question to some cronies of the former ex-Senator in the Kapihan, but he entered no one who. Brothers-in-law Vicente D. Cruz (also former ex-Senator Ernesto Maceda, and Gumpo. In the census would only be embarrassing to all of them and more probably it is due for arrest and appeal. Maybe somebody is not satisfied with the proposed payment, or division of the money.

In any case, Jinggoy, which had brought the case had named the Lichauco Rodriguez Speaker Sandoval, now had developed an allergy to Lichauco lawyers no mention counsel, Sandoval (Gumpo says it is not a landfill but an open dump with no Environment Compliance Certificate [ECC]. Sure, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources [DENR] and no permit from him) and entered into another Vicente D. Cruz and Associates of the Rodriguez landfill as it is already full as certified by Sarao and the opening of the new dump. (Gumpo says his landfill is still good for two years and not ten months.)

Gumpo said, "You cannot do that" and Flores countered, "Sa ayaw sa, we have experience over all municipal governments in Bataan" and "let us have an ECC from the Lapus-Lapus Development Authority (LDA)."

Pity Ad Hoc Committee Chairman Sandoval because the Rodriguez officials are demanding that Sarao build a water treatment plant to take care of the leachate from the landfill, as stipulated in the contract, which would have meant another waste of money. Sarao probably decided it would be cheaper to build a new dump than build a water treatment plant, and settled with the cronies.

Now the treatment question: Can par nasobrahin dump garbage in your backyard without a water treatment plant? Can the Wack government make a dump in Rodriguez territory without the permission of its residents? Where do the residents go?

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Soul-less evictions for All Souls' Day

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

THE SCENE WAS ALL TOO FAMILIAR. At lunch-wrecking or if you aesthetically appealing. Stalls were being demolished, the goods confiscated, as the hapless vendors looked and cried. Metro Manila Development Authority Chairman Bayani Fernando had ordered the unseen large fries for the smooth flow of traffic come the All Souls' Day rush to the cemeteries.

A barangay captain stood to reason with the MMDA, saying that the vendors just borrowed the money for their stalls, hoping to cash in on the once-a-year business around the cemeteries, and there was no need for harsh measures. Fernando replied: We have to enforce the law, and no further discussion on the only language they understood.

Fernando spoke for the prevailing public, and for the larger interest in keeping the roads and sidewalks free for cars and pedestrians. These public spaces must not be appropriated for private profit, and Fernando can rightly demand that the police be mobilized for that law against all profiteers, big and small.

But, as former Chief Justice Antonio Bargnio has said in one of his famous dissents, there is "a right way to do the right thing in the right manner." In some homes has drawing students at other street commanders. Like those who publicly shower who engineered the aborted ZTE deal... is not the right way to celebrate All Souls' Day.

It is strange that in a country where business schools offer fancy courses in entrepreneurship, we cannot effectively resist against government-as-usual. Instead of building a capital and public infrastructure, less certainly we draw headlines, or shine stalwart. They are bolder than fish—or fair protection to one who inherited the wealth has not the ability to maintain it. Or worse, they are the ones who are the ones who are the ones who

Conspiracy at the summit

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

MANILA IS NOTORIOUS FOR SPINNING CONspiracy theories as fellow enthusiasts for events that are hard to believe. One such event was the assassination of Julius Caesar in ancient Rome on the Ides (or 15th) of March.

On that day, a stunned the weekend held no surprises. Runners were sweeping the city this Eurasia weekend by jamboree of this and that. I said, to myself, "This can happen."

It was the confidence of the politico that was stunning.

From the time Eurasia was nominated by plunder by the Southeast Asian on Sept. 12, a total conspiracy was in the air, a conspiracy reaching almost behind the backs of the Filipino people at the summit of political power to fore-stall the grant of executive clemency. The conspiracy took longer than expected.

In five days in a row, the politicos let out a gasp and a roar, and then, in unison, "The verdict is in."

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Culture of bribery as a legacy

BRIBERY HAS BECOME A WAY of life for the Arroyo presidency. It is the administration's resource to buy support whenever a political wind or squall comes to frighten it or put in the dock and its very existence is threatened. It is the administration's mechanism to buy the loyalty of people and "persuade" them to do its bidding.

The blatantness and impunity with which the bribery is performed and given boggle the mind. Nobody is being spared from the crusades of the administration's "paramours." Cash-rich or, rehapse-ones reportedly determine to elevate officials in the La Union residence of the Arroyos during the 2004 presidential election; "dictation" were given to Catholic bishops in the confessions of their confessors; countless committees in a year; brothers were dangled before congressmen; and the list of corruption would redeem a weak and limpid impeachment complaint. Bribes were offered to a cabinet member as a golf course and to a Supreme Court justice of the Sandiganbayan "cursed" broker of a broadband deal.

And now, "cash gifts" for governors, mayors and congressmen, given right in the center of the presidency, in Malacañang, in exchange for continued "loyalty" to the administration.

There are just some of the "overly generous deals" that have come to light in the media. Given the inclination and track record of the administration, there must be probably more, for sure believers from have been exposed.

In essence, what we have here is not just an illegitimate but also a criminal presidency which uses corruption to thwart the natural limits of this action.

—SERGIO C. OSIAS,
1 Gregorio Araneta St.,
Lapidol Green Village,
Tandang Sora, Quezon City

'If economy's growth is impressive, then why am I not rich?'

SIXTO MACGARA EXPLAINED: "If GNP is the sum total of the economic growth compared to family income. Growth is not the same as development. In one hand, economic growth is the capacity to satisfy the needs of people. This capacity could be best expressed in numbers, robust and sustained income (GNP) or related income per person (per capita GNP). On the other hand, economic development is a process. This process leads to economic to a happy, healthy and wealthy life. This economic term gives but not necessarily the whole. The same way that a person may grow old but not grow up.

Family income can also be used to show income distribution. It is usually done by surveying households. But the GNP is a better indicator of economic growth since it is done by looking at the production of firms.

The second quarter statistics showed the GNP grew by 8.1 percent in real terms from the same time last year. Also, the per capita GNP of the 88.5 million of us Filipinos grew to 84,270. How long would it take us to double the per capita income should we continue to grow at this amazing rate? I crunched the numbers assuming 7 percent growth. It will take us about eight years or until 2015 to double the real national income. I hope this would be enough to eradicate extreme poverty.

I wonder. If the economy's growth is impressive then why am I not rich? While some businessmen have accumulated wealth, I am one of the hapless souls naive, physical poverty. If I were to be asked to explain the disparity of GNP growth to my lot as a blue-collar worker, I would point out the following.

• The GNP shows the economy's total growth. The growth in this volume of services in the economy may differ. I might belong to a sector that is not growing in line as the nation's production records.

• Like a rich, the economy has two sides: private and public. The public sector is having difficulties in meeting its revenue targets. The highest element of the nation's income go it in the private sector's hands. This has been the case during the growth.

• I must reassure my professors (one is in other teachers) in this latest industry. It is possible that the cause of my economic standing is universal and not restricted to me?

• If the problem is internal than I should study hard, work harder and pray much more. I must live within my means. I should earn enough to provide for the basic needs of me now—the only one I have so far.

—RYAN LAT GARCIA
G. CAMBAL St.,
11 Luis Banghay St.,
1100 Sampaloc, Quezon City

(Dr. Cayaco, thank you for the sign of your hope. In your sentence "GNP is a superior indicator of economic growth" you are clearly referring to growth of production. Since "GNP" stands for Gross National Product, it specifically alludes production.

When I said in my column to "In order to assess if the economy is doing well or doing badly, it is important that one concept of family income is superior to the concept of GNP. The income of the family is an excuse of assessing economic goods and services."

In this, this is to put because of "the economy" is not in production but its capability of families to access economic goods and services. The capability definitely falls over 2003-2006, since previous fix is in the private sector's hands. This has been the case during the growth.

I must reassure my professors (one is in other teachers) in this latest industry. It is possible that the cause of my economic

Excellent analysis of SC decision

MICHAEL L. TAN'S SHREP SET excellent and factual analysis of the Philippine Supreme Court's Oct. 9, 2007 decision on the Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the 2004 Code made clear that central issue in the Administrative Code which nearly doubles the government's health regulatory functions. The remainder in the Court's decision—the "trade issue for subjected to wage from the legislature for the public purpose—is expendable important.

Perhaps without knowing it, the Court was refusing an important principle underlying all deliberations of the Tariff and Trade (GATT) 1960 onwards. Article XI of the Tariff of the General Agreement, which removes general exemptions, states: "Subject to the requirements that such measures are not applied in a manner which would constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination between countries where the same conditions shall be construed to prevent the adoption of measures by any country not conforming provisions of measures ... necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health ... necessary to secure compliance with laws or regulations which are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Agreement ..."

Sincere thanks for this helpful information.

—JOHN C. SIBUL
clare@yahoo.com

Out-of-this-world Church leaders

ARE THE SHARKS OF MINDANAO living in the Philippines or in some place outside earth? I can agitate in their watery claim that there is no solid ground or to question the sacred values and integrity of Bishop Ambo Efraim Fernandez and his colleagues. Their power has grown and has colonies, and that the old to reign a prominence.

I cite impotency and scandals, buy fish bulk sold on vending carts, obscene and insolent officials on one is seeing their silence all people in government are corrupt.

Then another "just, hope in fact, hard my fatalistic to gobustos," they say, shocking to the moral standards in the government (e.g., bullets in Maguindanao and ZTE deal).

It seems that the ordinary people has more moral sense in their world life than the bishops. I wouldn't wonder why, though Bishop Ambo is, at least, comfortable (that is, if not de-social-ized) cannot survive under the current state of affairs. He is now receiving "donations" from government. A favorite removed from the people, drowned with donations from government parties, and media. Indeed, Bishop Ambo is a "man of the people."

I have no illusions about our bishops. My experience with them is more often drawn their being insolent, unbelievable and vague in their situations in issues. Even though from state to state there are few among them who can light a spark of hope in our heart with their public pronouncements on social issues. Sad to say, I have more of them unmannered, lifeless and wanting of vigor in the service of people.

I remember looking up to Archbishop Oscar Cruz, Bishop Francisco Claver, Bishop Julio Labayen, Bishop Antonio Fortich, Bishop Teodoro Bacani, Bishop Jesus Varela, Bishop Francisco Cruz, Bishop Jesus Varela, Bishop Francisco Cruz, Bishop Jesus Varela, Bishop Francisco Cruz

PHILIPPINE OBSTETRICAL AND GYNECOLOGICAL SOCIETY (Foundation), INC.

ANNUAL CONVENTION & 61st ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

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Messages

MALACAÑAN PALACE
MANILA

We warmly greetings to the Philippine Obstetrical and Gynecological Society (Foundation), Inc. as you hold your 2007 Annual Convention and 61st Anniversary Celebration.

Your anniversary is a milestone in your enduring commitment to advance medicine and gynecology in the country for almost six decades. I commend your efforts to enhance the welfare of your members and to continue to serve the medical needs of our women particularly the mothers.

Through your convention, with the theme, "Concerns, Controversies and Challenges in Current Ob-Gyn Practice," may you further improve your technical knowledge and skills in order to serve your patients with utmost care.

The government works to make quality healthcare more affordable and accessible to our people. I hope that you will continue to be an active part of this endeavor. Together, we can help the poor and some more, a greater capacity to fight poverty and improve the overall health and well-being of the people.

Best wishes and fabulous touring time!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Warm greetings to the officers and members of the Philippine Obstetrical and Gynecological Society (Foundation), Inc. as they hold their 2007 Annual Convention and 61st Anniversary with the theme, "Concerns, Controversies and Challenges in Current Ob-Gyn Practice."

The Department of Health welcomes this event as an initiative of your commitment to undertake more worthy actions that will further improve the delivery of obstetrics and gynecology for the benefit of the country's women and children.

I wish you to further assess the problems and solutions and provide direction that will not only improve health care delivery but also lead our nation towards greater progress and development.

Congratulations and fabulous touring time!

FRANCISCO T. DUQUE III, MD, MSc
Secretary of Health

PHILIPPINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

The Philippine Medical Association extends its sincerest congratulations to the Philippine Obstetrical and Gynecological Society (Foundation), Inc. in the holding of their Annual Convention and 61st Anniversary Celebration.

The efforts in resolving concerns, controversies and challenges in Current Ob-Gyn Practice" undoubtedly ensure that you are continuously working on the upliftment of the quality of health care.

However, there are also several concerns, controversies and challenges faced not only by Obstetricians and Gynecologists but by the entire medical profession as well. Some of these are the issues of Reproductive Health Law, which has been implemented in the ARMM, Malasakit Center, Doctor-to-Doctor Referral System, Medical Tourism, Telemedicine, Nursing Exodus and Brain Drain, to be addressed. Some of these are the issues of doctors, most of whom have left the country and studies are ongoing attempt to maximize as a means of retention and the recommendations of dissolving the Board of Medicine and Nursing, separating this having passed by both Houses which are detrimental to our profession and to the other allied health professionals, duplications in these bills are apparent by our fellow physicians.

Rest assured that the PMA will continue its struggle to fight for every physician's rights and welfare as the Philippine Medical Association. The services in our name will exist for matters of the entire medical profession. The services in our name will exist for matters of the entire medical profession.

Welcome and I love you all!

JOSE SAN ANDRES, MD
President

PHILIPPINE OBSTETRICAL AND GYNECOLOGICAL SOCIETY (Foundation), INC.

Once again, the PHILIPPINE OBSTETRICAL and GYNECOLOGICAL SOCIETY (Foundation), Inc. takes great pride in hosting and welcoming you to the 2007 Annual Convention and 61st Anniversary Celebration on November 4-7, 2007.

The significant and prestigious events will be held at the Sofitel Hotel Philippine Plaza and the Philippine International Convention Center, where foreign speakers and local experts and researcher welcoming to the Asia-Pacific & Worldwide.

The year's Convention with its theme, Concerns, Controversies, and Challenges in Current Ob-Gyne Practice" is a manifestation of our strong commitment to have continue access and to the best trends in our profession.

The meeting will start with several pre-convention postgraduate programs which include Reproductive Medicine & Surgery, Infectious and Pelvic Medicine, Basic Human Medicine & Anesthesia and Gynecologic Oncology. The Scientific Program Committee has prepared an excellent update for the scientific sessions, symposia, workshop, and extemporaneous papers' discussions in the different subspecialties of the Society.

Adding value to the Convention are the annual PPOGS Symposia, giving of Awards in Outstanding Fellows and Diplomates, Presentation of Merit Scholarships and Fellowships and the Induction of new officers for the year 2008.

To our sponsors and benefactors, to the Organizing Committee and to all those who gave their untiring support to ensure the success of the Annual Convention, our sincerest gratitude.

Godbless! MABUHAY and PEACE!

ROGELIO PEREZ MONDOLA, MD
President

PHILIPPINE OBSTETRICAL AND GYNECOLOGICAL SOCIETY (Foundation), INC.

Greetings!

As we usher in the 60th decade of our society, the Annual Convention and Anniversary Celebration that marks 61 this time, is an unprecedented and gynecologists are to be relevant in current practice we have to and will continue to offer updated and relevant issues with what is good evidence and made the knowledge.

After all, at the end of the day we aspire to protect our right to better lives and the Philippines, which can only be by the enthusiastic and we Fellows involved the presenters and chairmen of our fellow members in every and with a sincere and honest desire to be the physicians. It is for those reasons that we come up with plenary sessions that deal with generalities in practice, and gynecologic subspecialties in detail but not forgetting the needs from medical emergencies and delivery where we start and not finish as well.

The convention is only once a year but it is a year in and most in the making, in behalf of the Board of Trustees and the Organizing Committee, we thank you for the privilege of the profession and the opportunity to service to our colleagues and women population.

Godspeed!

ANTONIO DIZON B. GARCIA, MD
Vice President

Board of Trustees

Regional Directors

Awardees

Novelo Lecture | Guest of Honor & Inducting Officer

Organizing Committee

Committee Chairs

Convention Highlights

DAY 0 ,SATURDAY NOVEMBER 03, 2007

DAY 1 ,SUNDAY NOVEMBER 04, 2007

DAY 2 ,MONDAY NOVEMBER 05, 2007

DAY 3 ,TUESDAY NOVEMBER 06, 2007

DAY 4 ,WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 07, 2007

Across the NATION

DENR clears mine firm in fishkill

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND Natural Resources has cleared the mining firm Lafayette Philippines Inc. of any hand in Sunday's fishkill in Napu-Napu, Albay.

Environment secretary Angelo Reyes said reports submitted by the Environment Management Bureau (EMB) had shown that the fish kill was caused by a phytoplankton bloom and not by any pollutants.

Quoting results of environmental tests, Reyes explained that the dead fish washed ashore were confined to a 10-meter radius from the pier, or 10 kilometers from the mine site.

Contrary to reports of extensive fishkill, Reyes said only two sacks of dead fish, weighing 20 kg, were collected from the pier.

"There was no indication of a massive fishkill from the shores of Barangays Caromay, San Barbara, Malobago, Papaflor and Hamorawon," he said, citing reports of the investigating team and statements of barangay leaders.

The MGB, however, could not establish the cause of the fishkill. It has sought the assistance of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in conducting more extensive laboratory studies.

Tests

In his tests on water samples from the five barangays cleared, Reyes said, they were "generally within DENR standards for pH and cyanide parameters, according to them."

The team, composed of technical personnel from the Environmental Management Bureau and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, however, would continue the probe, he added.

Clemente Bautista, coordinator of the Calabanan People's Environment Network, scoffed at the initial results of the investigations.

"That's a weak argument. The result of the project directly flows into the sea and nowhere else," he said in a phone interview. "That's quite irresponsible of them to close the lines without first determining the cause of the fishkill."

He maintained that the fishkill was massive because it affected five barangays.

Residents reported fishkill in the five barangays on Sunday, after three days of heavy rain, and suspected that these came from the vicinity of the mining site.

Back in operation

The government suspended Lafayette's operations in January 2006, months after it spilled mine tailings in October 2005, but it cleared its resumption in February.

The spills resulted in a series of fishkills and toxic metal contamination.

Reyes said the team found no overflow or spill from the waste pond of the mining project, or the lower tailings storage facility that might be heavy rain on Saturday.

It also found the quality of mine site water from the fishkill site to the point area to be within DENR standard for cyanide, and that Lafayette had stopped operating the project's mill plant since Friday for added.

Deeper probe

Mayor Dick Gallum of Rapu-Rapu said he would seek the help of the Philippine National Police and possibly other law enforcement agencies since the results of the water sample analysis disprove that the fishkill was not related to the mining operations.

Gallum said the statements of the town's councilors that a group of local politicians allegedly staged the fishkill as suspicion that Lafayette supported some municipal officials in the Oct. 29 barangay elections.

"There was a very strong sentiment that must be severely penalized if proven true," Gallum said.

Protection, mostly fishermen, stopped to the municipal hall demanding immediate relief assistance and compensation for the latest fishkill.

Gov. Joe Salvo Salalila also called for an investigation. *Reports from Bobby Q. Labalan, Ephraim Apolinar and Juan Escandor Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon, and TJ Burgonio in Manila*

'There was no indication of massive fishkill'

Army holds Bayan Muna E. Visayas spokesperson

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE MILITARY arrested on Sunday the spokesperson of the Bayang Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) in Eastern Visayas in a town in Samar.

The soldiers arrested Vito Arbo at around 4 p.m. in Barangay Dao, Pinabacdao town, Eastern Samar, according to his daughter Geraldine.

Lt. Col. Jonathan Torres, commanding officer of the 52nd Infantry Brigade based in Catbalogan City admitted that Arbo was in military custody but claimed that Bayan leader was just "invited" for questioning.

No warrant

"My father was seized by the soldiers without any warrant. We opposed to their arrest but they insisted that [when he did not commit any illegal act] for them to justify his arrest," Arbo's 30-year-old daughter said in an interview yesterday.

She said her father was interested in Pinabacdao's rabbit helping in the campaigns of a relative who ran for office during Monday's barangay elections.

Geraldine said several soldiers were roaming the streets of Pinabacdao, more than 60 kilometers from Tacloban City, on Saturday.

Went out to vote

She explained that her family went to Pinabacdao to vote. "My father did not resist when he was arrested [by the soldiers]," Geraldine also added. Arbo and his family live in Tacloban.

Arbo hails from Pinabacdao, where he ran for mayor but lost during the 1998 elections.

Geraldine recalled that her father showed death on Jan. 27 when two armed men, riding on a motorcycle, ambushed him in Pinabacdao.

Luckily, she said, the firearm of her father's assailants misfired.

In good hands

Soldiers led by Lt. Alex Illiut brought Arbo to the headquarters of the 8th Infantry Battalion, which is based in Catbalogan, according to Perez.

But Torres claimed that he was only "invited" Arbo.

"He is in good hands. And it was not an arrest, but a mere intervention him to answer our queries. So, his family has nothing to worry about. I am taking full responsibility for his safety," Torres said in a phone interview.

He explained that the soldiers were in Pinabacdao because they received information from a Barangay Tax resident about the presence of 12 alleged members of the New People's Army in the village.

"Unfortunately, we were late in arriving in the area since the informant were no longer there.

FLOWER SEASON
Flower vendors, like this one, fill up a portion of Quezon Avenue in Lagaspi City a day before the commemoration of All Souls' Day.
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER/CHRISTOPHER LOZADA

All Saints' Day brings flower fest near graves

LEGAZPI CITY—IF SALES OF flowers are break on All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, why not hold a two-day flower festival near the crowded public cemetery?

So, all-women cooperative growers' cooperative in Barangay Tipanoy have it again exploiting the opportune times in what should better known sentimental occasions of reverence for the dead.

Showcase

It is encouraging to producers just like what it did in 2005 and 2006, according to Crescencia Gomez, co-op chair.

People normally buy flowers for their departed loved ones, and cooperative members, numbering 30, would find it opportune to make their cut flowers available near the cemetery and sum more, she said.

Rose varieties

As American rose sells for P250 a dozen or the festival, but the public will have a wide range of varieties to choose from, Gomez said.

Gomez said the cooperative had asked the city government to pave the bumpy road leading to the cemetery so that the quality of flowers would be maintained.

Dalhousie lines from the main source of income for many Tipanoy residents, she said.

Rebel Uriel, *Inquirer Bicolandia*

3 drown as boat capsizes off north Cebu

By Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—THREE HIGHSCHOOL students, including a 13-month-old boy, drowned while two others remained missing when a motorboat capsized off Catarman Island in northern Cebu on Wednesday night.

Police said the young Ira Jo Cris Cochran and Sidney were found in the waters off the coastal village of Cumboan at 6 PM yesterday morning, police said.

The motorboat MB Anton was then in the waters from the shore of Barangay Kauit in Pilar at about 7 p.m. when strong waves battered the vessel and swept it to 50 meters from where it capsized, Camello said.

The boat had 15 passengers and 13 crewmen when it left Danao City in mainland Cebu at 2 p.m. on Wednesday.

Two of the passengers drowned, bathed at the port of San Francisco town, also in Camotes, before proceeding to travel to the nearby island of Poro.

All crewmen and the six passengers were rescued.

Boat captain Elmer Camilo swam to the shore and got south or prompted to rescue the passengers and crew, Camello said.

He said nobody at the part of Kauit noticed when the Anton was capsized early in the day were because of the heavy downpour.

Most of the passengers were Filipino natives who have been living in the mainland and returning to the island on All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day.

Farmers on 1,700-km walk for land reach Leyte

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—"LEDRIP" farmers from Surallan town in Bukidnon (walked 1,696 on Tuesday night in a protest march from their province to Manila to urge the government to give back their ancestral land.

The 53-member group, 11 of them women, decided their to undertake to regain ownership of their 144-hectare ancestral land in Barangay San Vicente, Surallan, by going to Manila on a 1,700-kilometer walk that would end on Dec. 10. The farmers walked 20-40 kilometers today.

Powers that be

The Department of Agrarian Reform issued in 1997 certificates of land ownership award (CLOA) to the 144-ha land to 117 farmers belonging to the Magsaysay Development Cooperative (Magsaysay Kauswagan Multipurpose Cooperative).

But then Executive Secretary Ruben Torres issued a resolution approving the conversion of the property from agricultural to agro-industrial as requested by the landowner, Norberto Quisumbing Sr. Management and Development Corp.

In applying for reclassification, the corporation claimed plans to set up the Development Academy of Mindanao, a cultural center, business by Livelihood Science, a tennis, library, golf course and the Mindanao Sports Development Complex in the property.

ENDURANCE Some Surallan, Bukidnon women who farmers San Jacinto Bridge commencing the school-provinces of Ilocos and Leyte on Nov. 1 on their 32nd day of "walk for land, walk for justice" toward Metro Manila.
JOEY GABIETA/INQUIRER VISAYAS

No projects

But the proposed projects did not materialize. Instead, the corporation sold the land to San Miguel Foods Inc. (SMFI) in 2002.

Despite several setbacks in their efforts to get back the land, the farmers remained hopeful since the land remained idle, except for a piggery farm owned by SMFI.

"The land is ours. Our ancestors have tilled the land. And we are willing to sacrifice and walk this far if this is the only way our government, particularly [Secretary Ayong will hear] us," said Hilda Ann Inam, 56 and the oldest in the group.

Her father Anastacio was one of the farmers in the area who had tilled the land. Instead is the name given to indigenous peoples of Mindanao.

Pigs

Napoleon Merida Jr said that pushing up the piggery farm that was supposed to be theirs was so telling.

"Even this name that we call ours farmers are being treated over more pigs? That we don't have rights to till and own our own land?" he said when interviewed at the social hall of the Archdiocesan Church in Tacloban City, where the group stayed.

Rebekah Father Napoleon Jr and sister, Charlie Lorenzo and Sharlie, also joined the march.

"I don't like to leave but to cease thinking that I would be leaving behind my young children. But they knew that what their mama is doing is for their own good and for a good future," said Cheryl, who was in team.

Church sympathy

Archbishop Jose Palma of the Archdiocese of Palo expressed sympathy for the farmers' plight in a pastoral letter.

"We are close to you with you in our prayers and, as the parishes with which you pass by may have generously shown, in offering you food and shelter, especially for your overnight repose," the archbishop said in his letter to the group.

Lawyer Arlene Bag-ao of the Bukanal Mindanao, a nongovernment organization helping the farmers, said the group left San Vicente, Surallan on Oct. 30 and had made 20 stops so far, covering 16 towns in Misamis and seven towns in Southern Leyte and Leyte.

The group left Surallan with just three sacks of milled rice but the provision has remained untouched as many have given them food and rice, including the DAR regional office in Tacloban. The group left city at dawn of Thursday dawn for Samar.

Magistrates on buses hear cases of poor litigants

From page A1

lawn purchased by the Supreme Court as part of its JOM programs—parked in front of the Bataraj Hall of Justice.

Most only those hearings, Cabuang finally agreed on Oct. 19 to accept P15,000 from his neighbors as a settlement. He also decided to forgive them.

"They are also people who make mistakes. The important thing is they admitted were sorry," says Cabuang, who admits to having initially promised to himself that he would not rest until his attackers were behind bars.

Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Eduardo Nachura, who JOM is one of the many judicial reform projects that the Supreme Court has initiated to address a host of major problems plaguing the administration of justice. They not only involve the prolonged resolution of cases but also such things as the filling of court vacancies made worse by inadequate pay and lack of security for judges.

Guatemalan experience

Villelen, vice chair of the JOM committee, says the program was patterned after one successfully implemented in Guatemala that a team of magistrates had examined for adoption in the Philippines. The concept was to bring court services to the masses, and allow people—especially the poor and the marginalized—to have real access to justice," she says.

With funding from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, the Supreme Court launched the program in 2004, initially acquiring a fully furnished bus that served as a courtroom and mediation center.

The first has a room with in this for the judge, a stenographer, the lawyers and their clients. This is separate from a mediation room with similar facilities.

Villelen recalls that the initial months of the JOM were dedicated to resolving criminal cases involving minors in Metro Manila. "We did not bring the bus to the courts, but directly to the detention centers or jails where the minors were," she says.

'Family events'

The court sessions then became "family events." Parents attended and even participated in the hearings. "Through their involvement in their children's cases, the parents have a better understanding of the crimes and realize the ways in which they have neglected the young ones," Villelen said.

The initial hearings in December 2004 immediately led to the release of 60 children in a little over a week.

The bus entered the metropolis to hear cases of minors until Republic Act No. 9344, or the Juvenile Justice Law, was passed in early 2006 to address the needs of those under 18 who have been accused of crimes.

Adult offenders

The mobile court then went to regular jails—this time, to help adult offenders whose cases had been dragging out for years.

Metro Manila judges were allowed to have a special date for these cases and hold the hearings within the jail premises. This, Villelen says, allowed the swift disposal of cases.

"After 30 mobile operations' start, the Supreme Court bought another bus," Villelen said. This was brought to Cebu, where eight to 12 court teams—reliefs each served three to five municipalities—hailed judges.

A third bus was acquired for deployment in Iligan in Mindanao, but the executive judge there expressed concerns about the safety of the vehicle. "We then thought of making use of the other members of the bus, which is mediation," Villelen said.

Mediators take over

She says that under the Supreme Court judicial reform program, slated filed in mid-2008, which are classified as "medium," cases referred to the Philippine Mediation Center—composed of trained mediators from the Philippine Judicial Academy.

The mediations are given 20-to days to effective resolution of regular cases and 120 days for family cases. Should the parties refuse or fail to come to a settlement, the case goes back to the judge for a full-blown trial.

"This is a very good program of the Supreme Court which sadly has not been implemented properly all over the country," Villelen says, explaining that most cities and municipalities lack mediation centers and facilities.

This is where the JOM comes in, she says. The Supreme Court looked at places where the members of court mediation judges' normal case loads, such as Bilibid and Bulacan.

Bringing down backlog

Judge Alfredo Tenedo says he inherited 3,000 cases when he took over the Taytay RTC in 2005. It is now down to 2,400, but still far from the ideal 300-200 cases.

"Even if we dispose of 60 or 70 cases each month, we would still get a hundred more to offset our accomplishment," he says. Lowering the court's case load is essential for judges to come up with quality decisions, he says.

Tenedo also says that most of the cases before him can be reduced, such as land disputes and violations of the bouncing checks law.

Villelen says that delays in the resolution of cases are normally a result of the failure of witnesses and lawyers to appear in court, motions for postponement and predictable appeals. "Sadly, our culture also plays a big part in the filing of countless cases," she says.

An eye for an eye

Those who believe they are wronged seek vengeance as all cost—an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

Villelen points out that mediation can solve 90 to 95 percent of pending cases, leaving only 5 percent for the judge to decide upon.

"Most of the cases settled all the cases given to us," Bagtasan said.

She says that mediators in many cases have been able to help the parties decide on an amicable solution. "This is a small program, but a great step in reminding the people that they can resolve [it], the way we view conflict, the way we view justice," Villelen said.

"Even if saying that those who have been in the shadow have many in law seeks justice and into some we believe that this will be made true for many people," she added.

Muntinlupa a paradise compared to cramped city jails

From page A1

former Rep. Romeo Jalosjos, a convicted child rapist and self-styled Pen Interprise.

A lentil resort owner, Jalosjos is responsible for most of the luxuries inside the rather drab prison—the paved walkways, a gymnasium equipped with a P4-million audio system and the mini-park.

He has currently managed to make his jail time comfortable, staying in his homey 35-square-meter cell. There, he has held lavish birthday parties.

He is now enjoying "Working-out" privileges and is allowed to host family visits around the entire Metropolitan penal reservation after his two-life terms were commuted by President Macapagal-Arroyo in June.

Baking school

To accomplishment his QH Coffee and Bakeshop, Jalosjos set up a baking school which trains inmates in the culinary art of whipping up sweets and other treats for sweet-ing deliveries.

Nothing in the little bakeries inside the prison complex are the livelihood center and the five-hour "pawf" built now to the cell of its owner, murder convict and former Rep. Jose Villarosa.

Practically a convict-in at the NBP, Villarosa was convicted for the death penalty in March 2000 by a Quezon City court for murdering the two sons of his political rival, former Rep. Nicardo Quintos, over land and politics in Occidental Mindoro.

All-purpose swimming pool

According to NBP insiders, who requested anonymity for security reasons, the penal was originally a swimming pool, which was later converted into a tank for soaking aqua shells for his handicrafts.

With such facilities bandwidled by moneyed convicts, the maximum compound has become more of a "paradise" for poor inmates like 62, a murder convict who had served eight years at the cramped and soggy Caloocan City jail.

62 said he did not mind if affluent convicts like Jalosjos or Villarosa lolipod to their spacious "hotel" while he shared a dormitory with around 300 inmates and slept on a makeshift cot.

Such a condition, he said, was better than what he had in the smelly city jail swarming with clammy human assemblage.

'I like it better here'

"I like it better here because it is more spacious," 62 told the hacienda in Filipino. He could also wander around the prison complex if it got too crowded and not inside his dormitory, he said.

He recalled that at one point during his stay at the Caloocan jail there in 1994 to 2003, he shared with 200 inmates a small "brigada" (block) that could accommodate only a maximum of 120 people.

Due to the cramped prison conditions, getting enough sleep was a difficult feat among the inmates, who were most of the time reduced to a sitting position at nighttime.

"If one moves, everybody moves," he said, as the jampacked dormitory floormates, he left asleep sitting or we lay on our side to minimize the space we were occupying," 62 said.

Chicken in crammed coop

Indeed, who is into a similar scenario, felt like a chicken caged in packed coop when he was at the Quezon City Jail. He added that sometimes he would sit to the same spot the whole day wanted that if he left he just a second, it would be taken over by another inmate.

He added that some of the prisoners, who were detained he from the toilet to the dormitory, relieved themselves in empty cans or cups instead of risking stepping on fellow inmates and drawing their ire.

He remembered getting bodyone summer because of poor ventilation in his crammed cell.

Congestion at Caloocan jail

Based on the records of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, which oversees 41 jail facilities and servers 25,515 prisoners across Metro Manila, the Caloocan jail has the highest congestion rate with 1,407 persons as of September. Packed in the facility with a cell area of 315 square meters are 1,665 prisoners.

International standards allow 3 square meters per inmate—or 110 inmates for the Caloocan jail, said Supt. Jennifer Barrera Jr., director of the BJMP Regional Capital Region.

"Our No. 1 problem is really congestion but the bureau has been implementing certain policies that help minimize jail congestion," Barrera told the bureau.

Since the BJMP-MOU strictly implemented its "no commitment order, no admission" protocol in July 2006, it has managed to curtail at least 15 percent of the population in the city jails.

In order to further decongest detention facilities, the bureau made sure that it firmly enforced its existing policies, such as the release of qualified inmates through parole and probation, and the release of inmates who have served their sentences.

Barrera also said that around 40 percent of convicted of petty offenses, such as grave threats, malicious mischief and illegal gambling, should either be detained at home or be subject to community service.

The judiciary should consider on sentencing and strengthening house or supervised detention, in which an offender would be confined to his residence under the tight watch of a jail personnel or the barangay leaders, Barrera said.

DELICIOUS PORTRAITS when the call of an Mayor Antonio Sanchez of Calauan, Laguna, at the NBP's maximum security unit. He was convicted in 1994 of rape and double murder. Photo was taken in 1999. EDUARDO

HUMAN CONVICT Claudio Teehankee Jr., a son of the late Supreme Court Chief Justice, is shown in this file photo in his cell at New Bilibid Prisons (NBP). He is serving a life term for the 1991 killing of Roland Chapman and Maureen Hultman. EDUARDO

Barangay justice eases court work load

From page A1

town known as barangay justice advocates (BJAs) have been saving countless litigants money and time.

In the long run, implementing such a mediation and conciliation system in over 40,000 barangays would help ease court dockets, says lawyer Soneta Mendoza.

Mendoza is consulting director of the Barangay Justice Service System (BJSS) of the Gerry Roxas Foundation. By, put in 1998, the BJSS is funded by the UK Agency for International Development (UK-AID).

The program is administered by the Department of Justice and the Department of the Interior and Local Government. It is supported by the Supreme Court, which provides training, and says it as a major help in easing a backlog of court cases.

Currently, there is no BJSS program in Metro Manila. Priority is given to Isa Pang se-ries.

Cauldron of subcultures

"Metro Manila is a cauldron of subcultures. The barangays in the provinces need this kind of program more. Compared to the rural barangays, the barangays in Metro Manila are relatively well off," Mendoza says.

Since its inception in 1998, the CBJP has trained thousands of BJAs all over the country. 83,874 of whom are conciliation-mediators.

But Mendoza estimates that the BJSS coverage is greater because of the "kinlds-down effect" as nearby barangays "We initially train a core group of resources, who will then train volunteers and duty to undertake actual dispute resolution as soon as the parties in looking for options to resolve their disputes," she explains in a phone interview.

Program manager Edwin Gabonito says difficult cases are referred to concerned agencies or courts.

Training

The BJAs are required to undergo training for eight days on the fundamentals of Philippine law, basic counseling and mediation skills, alternative modes of dispute resolution, and the court's flow.

To aid in settling family and inter-neighbor conflicts, the program includes a paralegal course on the Bill of Rights, family laws, Revised Penal Code, and laws on obligations and contracts.

Mendez notes that a BJA need not be of high social standing within the community, nor a minimum educational requirement is needed. "A lot of people in the community are quick-willing to do their part in maintaining the peace," she says. Most of the BJAs are ordinary members, teachers, policemen and employees.

In Mindanao, for example, where the BJSS is currently based, most of the conflicts concern property, land disputes, elopement and physical injuries.

Serving as buffer

Aside to the effect of having the BJAs to serve as a buffer, Gabonito says, that their mediation and arbitration skills help avert violence between families.

He, however, recognizes their limitations. They can only assist in the resolution of the civil liability of a dispute, not its criminal aspects.

"Crimes against the state, murder and rape will have to be handled by the country's police system," Gabonito added.

There is no monetary gain, but volunteers take pride in their task. "It's the community that 'authorizes' them because of the respect they have earned, some barangay officials treat paske having called. It's a kind of prestige for them," Gabonito says.

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₱17

Mr Cornrich
₱16.75

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Bustagon Kid
₱421.25

Tobleronne
₱63.75

Nestle
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₱21.50

Marby
₱40

Nerren
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₱41.25

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₱130

Nivea
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₱69.75

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DID YOU KNOW

By 2009, fire areas along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City were among the top most accident-prone spots in Metro Manila. A total of 11 accidents led to deaths or hap pening on the avenue during the period, according to the then Quezon Manila Command (QMC) Fire Chief Senior Inspector Glenn Cuenca City, on the other hand, also recorded many road crashes: 21 accidents with casualties in 2009, accounting for 100 cases of the total 324 incidents (34 percent).
Iddo Pedroso, Inquirer Research

PET MEMORIAL

All dogs (and cats) can go to heaven in style

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THANKS TO THE PHILIPPINE Animal Welfare Society, dog and cat owners can bestow the memories of their departed pets in style.

In Batasparan Valley, Loyola Heights in Quezon City, part of a 5,000-sq m lot outside the Ateneo de Manila Heights Co. has been turned into a burial ground for pets. The compound also houses the animal rehabilitation center of the organization.

Anna Cabrera, PAWS treasurer, disclosed that the center has the "pet memorial" to put cemetery.

"We never thought of this place as a burial ground," Cabrera said in humor. "Initially, we just wanted to accommodate pet owners who live in condominium units or apartment buildings who have no lots of their own to bury their dead pets."

Wall of remembrance

Apart from a common grave site where the animals are buried, there is a memorial wall on which is inscribed, "Gone but not forgotten." Underneath the words are gray and white tiles on which grief-stricken pet owners leave a message for their dead pets. There are also ledges on which they can place lighted candles or pictures of their departed furry friends.

Cabrera said it was since the soft opening of the PAWS Animal Rehabilitation Center in 2003, people have been asking about a place where they could give their pets a proper burial.

"We could not refuse them," Cabrera said, adding that they have many do not just "dump" the bodies of their beloved pets but that given them unconditional affection.

She recalled that some people even had tombstones made for their pets, and PAWS accommodated them because it would have been awkward and cruel to turn them away.

Pet owners are asked to make a minimum donation of P500 to the organization to cover the cost of digging a grave and the building of a third-floor columbary.

For those who want to have an engraved message on the memorial wall which was inaugurated earlier this month, they have to pay P1,000 per tile.

According to Cabrera, the proceeds from the wall will go to the shelter's operations.

"They (pet owners) know that it's a fundraising effort and they are making a donation to the shelter," she explained.

Unconditional love

"It's a way for them to remember their pets and give back what their pets had given them: Unconditional love and loyalty for which they never asked for anything in return," Cabrera stressed.

Some of the titles on the memorial wall were already filled up when the Inquirer visited the pet memorial.

One was Oscar thanked Pill, "for your companionship helped me through one of the most difficult periods of our life."

Its members, Oscar and Lana expressed their gratitude to their cat, Bonkie, for sensing their son's life. One title contained the words "Two, our princes, you will be missed." There was no indication what kind of animal Two was.

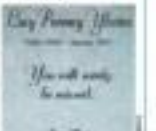
There was also a message from a family who described their dogs Bonie, Kikkat, and Bing as the light of their lives.

ALLYSSON ALE

THE QUEZON City-based Philippine Animal Welfare Society has set aside a burial place for dogs and cats that have been compassed.

He loved Lucy

By Cecily Palmes-Lontoc-Gallaser
Correspondent



DEAR 'S memorial site for his beloved black Labrador

HE LOST TEN TOMES AFTER Love Perrone, a major character from C.S. Lewis's well-loved "The Chronicles of Narnia." The youngest of the four Pevensie children, and the first to find the entrance to Narnia via the literal "The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe," part of the Narnia series, Lucy was loved by everybody.

Just like Lucy Perrone, Philippine Mail finalist Steve Thaler Ang, a black Labrador, was also well-loved.

The Thaler family's favorite pet died only a few months back, allegedly a pet owner to him. The circumstances surrounding her death remain a mystery to them.

Steve Angelo Lucy and another Labrador named Esther Bliss, his brothers. "Since my parents had just won the movie version of 'The Lion . . . at that time, they named my dog after Love Perrone," Thaler said.

"Technically, Lucy is my brother's dog but she more she treated with me in my parents' house for the first half of her life. I consider her my very own" he added.

Transformation

Thaler still remembers the day Lucy died. He noted that Lucy had transformed from an active dog, always jumping and running, to a listless creature.

Worried about Lucy's deteriorating health, Thaler decided to take Lucy to a veterinarian's clinic where the dog was confined overnight. Lucy died the next day after wasting blood the night before.

"Lucy even tried to lift her head to look at me for the last time. She was fully dazed and the vet had a hard time putting in the IV from to shield.

Memories

Thaler has fond memories of Lucy. "She was always content to see me, barking all the time, jumping up and down and wagging her tail vigorously. When I come close she would quickly lie on her back and move her some body, waiting for me to give her stomach rub," he said.

Before he bought a memorial tile from the Philippine Animal Welfare Society, Lucy was buried in front of Thaler's house. The pet lover learned about the monument project from Bob Baxter, director of "Philippine Idol" and "Shall We Dance," two popular television shows.

"I haven't visited Lucy's memorial tile yet but I'm planning to do so soon. At the same time I can help clean up the animal shelter," Steve said.

Mob prevents vote count in QC barangay

Supporters of 7 poll bets 'outraged' by alleged irregularities

By Reinnel P. Mi and Rosario

THE COUNTING OF VOTES CAST FOR CANDIDATES in the recent barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections was halted in a Quezon City school Wednesday night as some 300 supporters of seven candidates for barangay captain, alleging instances of poll fraud, barged inside the classrooms and seized several certificates of canvass (COCs) and other election paraphernalia from members of the board of election.

Teachers at the Fayette Elementary School in Tatag-Ilang St., Barangay Payatas A, were caught off guard when an angry crowd burst in from their several COC copies, tally sheets, and election returns and proceeded to burn the materials.

PO3 Jun Normanio of the Quezon City Police District Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit, said the crowd who led by some of 11 contenders for barangay chair in the area.

He identified the alleged leaders as Ernesto Perez, Aida Ilagan, Romeo de la Cruz, Jose Silva, Delfin Bargalla, Roger Marquez and Trajacyn Velasco.

Reynaldo Ongsio, the barangay's executive officer, however, said there were only around 100 supporters who entered the school premises. The others, he added, were just curiosity seekers.

Ongsio also claimed that the candidates did not enter the school, although some of them were present when the crowd was still gathering outside.

He added that the crowd was reportedly outraged by reports that the incumbent chair, Nora Isidoro, was about to be proclaimed winner because of Isidoro's victories in most precincts. The supporters of the seven candidates accused Isidoro of poll fraud. Reached by comment, Isidoro said the allegations were "stupid."

Normanio, however, told the Inquirer that the original copies of the COCs had already been sent to the Commission on Elections. Ongsio said they would send instructions from the Comelec before they proceed with the counting of votes.

Fiesta, picnic atmosphere at cemeteries in Metro Manila

By Dj Yap, Allison W. Lopez, John M. Bunoan, Tina S. Santos and Kenneth Ad Rosario

FIESTA OR CARNIVAL TIME?

At cemeteries in the Metro yesterday, it was a mixture of both.

But thanks to vendors selling all sorts of merchandise from flowers and candles to dyed chicks and toy trumpeters, a festive like atmosphere prevailed at the Manila South Cemetery on the day meant to remember the dead by departed.

Enterprising people headed center ready and Hello Kitty balloons. Others offered roasted corn and pizza, while a few peddled ice cream in busy thoroughfare.

At least one firm thought it the perfect occasion to advertise: phone subscription plans to the mourning multitude.

In a scene far removed from the Roman Catholic Church's idea of memorializing the observance of All Saints' Day yesterday, throngs of cemetery visitors were greeted by sellers and their products every step of the way.

On Wednesday, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines said the people should not observe the solemn point of the celebration, which was reverence for the dead.

Mood

But it seemed the mood yesterday was out of consistence.

From the corner of 19th Road Street and South Avenue to the entrance of the 25-ha cemetery in Makati City, vendors filled the sidewalks, greeting thousands who visited their departed loved ones.

As of mid-day yesterday, as many as 70,000 people were on the cemetery based on an estimate by the administration Tom Torres.

He said he expected the crowd to peak to 150,000 both and afternoon, until until late the evening, as many of the visitors had intentions of staying overnight.

Elements of the Manila Police District the cemetery, though based in Malate, is run by the Manila government the private, as did a group of Boy Scouts, Red Cross volunteers and Manila's own rescue workers. A total of 80 police also stood guard.

Senior Insp. Ernesto Sideron of the MPD Station 6 said the situation was generally peaceful with no evidence reported as of early afternoon.

The police security measures failed to dampen the festive mood at the Manila North Cemetery.

Beyond items

Though attendant steel bars, criminal gluttes and barbed drinks have been banned from the cemetery, Manila Police District director, Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, said families still carried the religious holiday through purposes, promise and family reunions.

Rosales said the Malabanan North Cemetery in Mt. Cruz, the largest in the country, had received 800,000 people in the premises at any given time during its peak days, while a total of 3.5 million were expected to visit.

LED by candling and a quiet setting for people visiting their loved ones at the St. Peter's Church Repository of the Apostolate along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City.

Among the prominent personalities buried at the North Cemetery are President Manuel Magsaysay, Sergio Osmeña and Manuel Roxas, and movie star Fernando Poe Jr.

Philippine National Police Director General Nicolas Rafael Jr., who arrived around 10:30

PHOTOS: A.D.

Repair work on other Valenzuela bridge starts next week

By Margaux C. Ortiz

AFTER REOPENING THE NEW and improved Tullahan Bridge to traffic recently, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) is set to rebuild another major infrastructure in Valenzuela City.

Angelito Tarona, DPWH National Capital Region assistant director, said the rehabilitation of the Tullahan-Ugong Bridge would begin early next week.

The DPWH official said the project would cost an estimated P88 million. The bridge is smaller than Tullahan Bridge, where an average number of 25,000 vehicles pass every day.

Tarona said cracks found at Tullahan Bridge's approaches were only "normal."

"The cracks found were only alligator cracks," he explained, adding that these were discovered in a small area of the approaches which were suspected underneath the asphalt.

The DPWH official said the engineers were able to temporarily restore the defect through the application of cold mix asphalt on Wednesday.

The DPWH will conduct regular loading operations on Monday night as the approach es to determine where the wa ter is coming from.

Square loading results the size of a square cut'ter in getting to the upper portion of the asphalt to determine the saturated portion of the soil.

"This is quite easy and I will take only an hour or so. We would not have to close the bridge to traffic while doing it," Tarona said.

Fiesta, picnic atmosphere . . .

From page A-7

a.m. to inspect the area, described the peace and order situation as "generally peaceful."

Late Wednesday evening, former President Joseph Estrada stood by the grave of the late senator Fernando Poe Jr., his bosom buddy.

The funeral wreath he offered at Plot 1 reads at the Manila North Cemetery: sight carried the message "To my President FPJ, from Erap."

"I still believe he [Poe] would have been the best president of this country," said Estrada, who was recently confirmed by President Macapagal-Arroyo after he was convicted of plunder.

"I feel good, I feel great because finally I was able to visit my good friend," he added.

Welcome

Supporters, screaming "Erap, Erap, Erap pa rin!" gave Estrada a frenzied welcome—under tight security by his bodyguards and Manila policemen —at the cemetery when he arrived at around 9:45 p.m.

Vehicles were banned inside the sprawling graveyard but Estrada's convoy was allowed to bring the former president to the Poe's family plot at the extreme eastern part of the cemetery.

As he stepped out of his vehicle, he headed for Poe's mausoleum where he was met by Poe's relatives, led by the late actor's sisters, Elizabeth.

Estrada had been expected at the cemetery since 3 p.m. of Presidential Angel Gascon, Estrada's media liaison officer, said the former president was already in his way when he was caught in a traffic jam somewhere in Quezon City.

"He changed his mind and decided to go back to San Juan and just return at 9 p.m. to avoid the traffic," Gascon said.

At the 114 ha Manila Memorial Park (MMP) in Muntinlupa City, visitors had already camped out as early as Wednesday night in order to avoid the crowds on All Saints Day.

Many of them don't want to be bothered by the few 1 crowd, so others came as early as Wednesday," said Denver Cruz of the society of Individuals in Radio and Civic Communication.

Apart from traffic enforcers and emergency response teams administering first aid, Boy Scouts were also tasked to patrol the area and assist families looking for their relatives' tombs.

The MMP has over 70,000 "tenants" and quite a handful of notable "occupants" like former senators Benigno Aquino Jr., senator Pepe Diokno, Blas Ople, Lorenzo Sumulong, Senator Flash Elorde, and the late Sen. Robert Barbers.

Muntinlupa City police chief Supt. Ronald Saulles said he expected 400,000 visitors at the most as many as the MMP, the largest cemetery in southern Metro Manila.

Short stay

Meanwhile, in Bagbag cemetery, Novaliches, Quezon City, the setup prevented visitors from staying for longer periods of time. People left quickly after lighting candles and saying their prayers because they had nowhere to stay, said Dolfee Jo-ya Abenado.

People usually stay for only 30 minutes as the apartment-type niches had no roof and chairs for visitors, he added. About 30,000 to 40,000 persons visit the cemetery at any given time, he added.

Roberto Lantzinghau, leader of the Red Cross volunteers' team at the cemetery said there were no major incidents that needed their attention.

Meanwhile, at the Holy Cross Cemetery, also in Novaliches, police told the Inquirer that several people tried to sneak in liquor by passing it off as a loved one.

More than two dozen sets of playing cards were also confiscated by roving police teams. Also confiscated were bottles of liquor, knives, hammers, and pairs of scissors.

Visitors

Bayleg de los Reyes, acting OIC of the Holy Cross Cemetery, said some 100,000 people had visited the site since people had been streaming in since Saturday.

Red Cross volunteers said at an said there were no major incidents in need of their immediate attention. Hundreds of people also stooped at the Depot ton of the Apostles, an estuary located under the St. Peter's Church on Commonwealth Avenue, also in Quezon City.

In a landscaped environment, some 600 people visited the cremated remains of their loved ones.

According to Arturo F. Labrador, head of the maintenance crew, there was no need to deploy policemen in the area since the crowd was generally smaller and "well behaved."

All dogs (and cats) can go . . .

From page A-17

Tess, also known as PAWS president Miss Hawkeswo-Lehmann, paid tribute to her departed cats by translating an ode to the words, "Where more than, Always loved . . ." There was another ode two bridges before for her dogs. "All our lives we see, Always loved . . ." the message on the second ode read.

There is a rule in honor of Bella, a dog who traveled from New York to Manila and to Heaven from May 2006 to March 2006. "Your memories will stay in my heart," was Mama Mody's message for her pet.

Philippine Idol finalist, Dino Ilustre, had also made, "You will always be 'winner'," on the Gh ho took care for his dog, Lary Pretzel.

HEAVENLY. One beside the tinted photographs of beloved pets at the PAWS cemetery.

Dedications

There were also dedications on other tiles in Nadia who was devoted as a doctor dog and Mod Ito, "Mom's beloved dog" for whom "He was short but sweet."

Cabrera said that the generous donations from the pet owners are vital to the PAEC operations. They spend a whopping P75,000 every month looking after 26 dogs and 11 cats housed at the PAWS shelter.

The cost of owning a memorial tile is minimal compared to the price of having a pet cremated which is pegged at P3,000.

"It is the one-offer cremation but there is a veterinarian in Laguna to whom we usually refer pet owners who want to avail of the service," Cabrera said.

Dr. Manny Reyes picks up the deceased pet, demonstrate the entire process through photographs and brings back the urn bearing the animal's ashes to its owners.

Cabrera said the pet memorial will be open until today from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. for those who wish to offer flowers and light candles for their departed pets.

"We are usually closed on Sundays and holidays. We are opening our doors this time to allow the pet owners to freely visit their pets," she said.

Although no one knows for sure whether all dogs (and cats) go to heaven, their owners, with PAWS' help, can send them off with their love, deal in style, too.

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Guaico

21 convicted of '04 Madrid bombings

Spain concludes its version of 9/11, but alleged mastermind is acquitted

MADRID—A SPANISH COURT WEDNESDAY convicted 21 people of involvement in the 2004 Madrid train bombings, but acquitted an Egyptian accused of helping mastermind the al-Qaida-inspired attack that claimed nearly 200 lives.

The early morning bombings on four packed commuter trains on March 11, 2004 were the deadliest terror attacks in the Plus since the Sept. 11, 2001 strikes against the United States.

The chief judge of the special antiterrorist court, Javier Gomez Bermudez, handed out the harshest sentences to two Moroccans—Jamal Zougam and Othman el-Gnaoui—and a Spaniard, Jose Emilio Suarez Trashorras.

They each received around 40,000 years in prison, although under Spanish law the maximum they can spend behind bars is 40 years.

Zougam placed explosives aboard one of the four targeted trains, while Trashorras and El Gnaoui were confronted repeatedly for supplying and transporting the explosives.

One of the alleged organizers of the attacks, Rabei Osman Sayed Ahmed, also known as "Mohammed the Egyptian," was acquitted on all charges.

He burst into tears and then kneeled to pray when the verdict was announced, Italy's ANSA news agency reported from Milan, where he is serving an eight-year prison sentence for belonging to a terrorist group.

"Acquitted, did you see?" the Egyptian said as police officers led him back to his jail cell.

A total of 28 defendants were on trial—19 mostly North Africans Amin Iseing in Spain and nine Spaniards charged with helping the explosives used in the bombings.

Ahmed was one of seven acquitted. The remaining 21 received sentences of between three and 30 years for crimes ranging from the use of explosives to membership in a terrorist group.

The judge assumed the duties down to a total of 1,06,075 years in prison, far less than the 111,066 years sought by the prosecution.

Lawyers for the convicted men have five days to announce whether or not they intend to appeal the verdicts to Spain's Supreme Court.

"Today justice was done and we can now look to the future," Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero said.

But the head of an association for families of the victims condemned the verdicts.

"We are going to appeal this because," said Pilar Manjon, who lost her 20-year-old son in the attacks. "I don't like to see killers walking free."

Other relatives also expressed disappointment.

"There are far too few guilty verdicts for such a horrific crime," said Maria Jose Gutierrez, a Spaniard who lost her sister in the bombings.

Gomez Bermudez announced compensation for the victims and their families of between 30,000 and 1.5 million euros ($43,000 and $2.1 million).

Tight security was in force for the verdict, with dozens of armed police wearing bullet-proof vests surrounding the court. In the room of the capital's ex-municipal fair with a machine gun was also parked outside the building, as a helicopter hovered overhead.

During the four-month trial which wrapped up on July 2, all of the accused professed their innocence and denied having any link to radical Islam or al-Qaida.

But several were convicted by witnesses who said they saw them leaving backpacks on the trains on the day of the bombings or by the discovery of traces of their DNA at key sites.

A VICTIM of Madrid's train bombings is seen following a break (inset at Madrid's Atocha station in this March 11, 2004 photo. A Spanish court on Oct. 31 found 21 people guilty of involvement in the bombings. Europe's deadliest al-Qaida inspired attack, which killed 191 people and injured 1,800. AFP/STR

Most of the accused said they knew some of seven suspected misconducters of the attacks before blew themselves up in a suburban Madrid apartment three weeks after the bombings as police closed in.

Zougam was one of the first suspects to be arrested. Police were able to trace the SIM card of a mobile phone that was attached to one of the train bombs that did not explode to a shop run by the Moroccan.

The string of 10 bombs exploded on commuter trains on March 11, 2004, leaving bodies and limbs scattered on railway tracks. A total of 191 people from 23 countries were killed and 1,841 others injured.

Evidence quickly began to point to Islamist radicals as general over Madrid's decision to send troops to back the US-led war in Iraq.

The attack was claimed later that day by the al-Qaida terror network of Osama bin Laden's organization. Jihadists scored a surprise victory in a general election three days after the bombings.

Zapatero promptly fulfilled a campaign promise to withdraw Spain's roughly 1,300 troops from Iraq. AFP

Chronology of major events

March 11, 2004: Ten backpack bombs explode on four morning rush hour commuter trains in Madrid, killing 191 people and injuring more than 1,800. Hours later, police find a van with detonators and a cassette tape with verses from the Koran at a train station through which all of the bombed trains had passed.

March 12, 2004: Police determine a bomb hidden in a backpack found outside the train station in Al Qaeda is the name of a detonator in the bombs—a system also used in the other bombs—is their first big break in the case.

March 13, 2004: Police make their first arrests, including a Moroccan bookman who sold the prepaid cards used in the cell phone detonators. Al Qaeda in Europe claims responsibility for the bombings in a video found near a Madrid mosque. An Arabic-speaking man with his face covered says in the video they were revenge for the Spanish troop presence in Iraq and Afghanistan.

March 14, 2004: Socialist opposition ruling unexpectedly in a previously scheduled general election. The conservatives had blamed the attacks on the armed Basque separatist group ETA, even as evidence of Islamic involvement emerged. Minutes later, Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar Lopez withdrawn Spain's troops from Iraq.

March 26, 2004: Police find detonators, traces of dynamite and fingerprints inside a local cottage which police suspect the bombs were made.

April 3, 2004: Seven suspects in the train bombings blow themselves up as police move in to arrest them in an apartment outside Madrid. Police describe them as explosives of the attacks. One suspect escapes but is eventually caught in Serbia. A special investigation will begin in the trial of the suspects.

April 11, 2004: Twenty-nine people are indicted over the attacks: 15 Moroccans, nine Spaniards, two Syrians, one Egyptian, one Algerian and one Lebanese.

Nov. 6, 2006: Prosecutors seek jail terms of more than 38,000 years for each of seven top suspects.

Oct. 31, 2007: Trial starts at a heavily guarded courthouse in Madrid. Over the course of five months of testimony, more than 300 witnesses and 70 experts take the stand. Prosecutors eventually drop charges against one suspect, reducing the total number of defendants to 28. They also change the sentences they are seeking for several suspects. In the end, they request terms of more than 38,000 years each for eight men accused of being mastermind, material participants or key accomplices. The trial ends after 57 days.

Oct. 31: Twenty-one people are convicted. Three of the main suspects are found guilty of mass murder and given sentences ranging from 34,000 to 43,000 years. Seven are acquitted, including Rabei Osman, an Egyptian who prosecutors alleged was the brains behind the Madrid plot.

Bill passed condemning Franco's dictatorship

MADRID—SPANISH LAWMAKERS passed a bill to make symbolic amends to victims of the Spanish Civil War and the ensuing dictatorship of Gen. Francisco Franco—an unprecedented bid to address a dark chapter of Spanish history that has been largely ignored.

Conservative critics of the legislation complained angrily that the bill, sponsored by Spain's Socialist government, digs unnecessarily at old wounds and does away with a spirit of reconciliation that accompanied the transition to democracy after the dictator died in 1975.

The vote in Spain's lower house of Parliament Wednesday formally declares Franco's regime, mandates that local governments fund efforts to unearth mass graves from the 1936-39 Civil War, orders the removal of all Franco-era symbols from streets and buildings, and declares "illegitimate" summary military trials that led to the execution or imprisonment of thousands of the general's enemies.

It pays tribute to all victims of the war, however, including Roman Catholic clergy and others executed by militia loyal to the elected, leftist Republican government that Franco took up against in 1936.

The legislation, known as the "Law of Historical Memory," must still pass the Senate—considered a formality.

Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, whose own grandfather was among the tens of thousands of people executed by Franco's forces, had made the legislation a priority of his term in office and nibbled superb, or an agreement between his ruling Socialists and several smaller parties.

The legislation passed despite the fierce objections of Zapatero's conservative opponents, who accused him of being driven by vengeance to rekindle national acrimony decades after Spain's transition to democracy. The celebration was approval of a democratic constitution in 1978.

The process frustrated an unspoken pact among parties to put the suffering of the war years behind them in the interest of rebuilding. He was crimes trials were held.

Other countries that lived through wartime atrocities did hold trials—notably Argentina, a post-Nazi Germany for instance. But for the most Spain is now trying to atone for the past by simply honoring victims, without penalizing anyone. AP

Japan ends 'war on terror' mission

TOKYO—JAPAN ON THURSDAY OFficially ended three days engaged on a refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, halting the close 10-ally's main role in the "war on terror" due to domestic opposition.

Japan, which has been officially pacifist since the end of World War II, has supplied fuel to US and other forces operating in Afghanistan under legislation first passed after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States.

But the government failed to extend the measure as the main opposition party, which controls one house of parliament, has vowed that Japan should not take part in "American wars."

Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba issued orders at 1 p.m. (0400 GMT) for Japan's two ships in the Indian Ocean—the destroyer Kirisame and the supply ship Tokiwa—to return to Japan.

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, whose predecessor quit in September in part due to his failure to prolong the deployment, vowed to "do my utmost for the safety passage" of new legislation to resume the operation.

"Terrorism is a challenge against free and open societies. The war on terrorism affects our national interests," Fukuda said in a statement.

"It is newly necessary for us to continue refueling activities in order to fulfill our responsibilities in solidarity with the international community which is trying to eradicate terrorism," he said.

But public opinion on the mission is sharply divided in Japan, whose military has not fired a shot in combat since the United States imposed a pacifist constitution after World War II.

Coalition nations facilitated for weeks with no success to persuade the opposition to change its mind.

Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer voiced "concern" about Japan's move.

"Defending terrorism is one of the highest security challenges the world faces. It is a global challenge and containing terrorism is a collective responsibility," Downer said.

However, criticism has been growing of military operations across nations taking part in the deadly campaign against remnants of Afghanistan's ousted Taliban regime.

The German parliament last month extended the country's troop deployment despite waning public support.

But Japan is in a unique political situation. The opposition in July won control of one house of parliament on a landslide over a raft of scandals under the government of then prime minister Shinzo Abe.

Main opposition leader Ichiro Ozawa—normally a longtime proponent of an active military role for Japan—has vowed to fight Fukuda on his legislative priorities until he calls early general elections.

US Ambassador Thomas Schieffer in one point warned that Ozawa's international position could hurt the Two countries' alliance although Washington have softened its tone.

Ozawa's Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) in turn accused the government of politicizing the dispute.

"The battleships are coming home and they want to put the blame on the DPJ. This is an Abe trap to make the DPJ look bad," Yukio Hatoyama, the party's parliamentary affairs chief.

The Indian Ocean mission at the time was groundbreaking for Japan, although it later went a step further and sent troops, since withdrawn, on a non-combat reconstruction mission to Iraq.

Japan to show it remains committed to the "war on terror," Japan said it would look at stepping up aid to Afghanistan and possibly Pakistan, a frontline US ally in the war. AFP

Washoe, a chimpanzee of many words, dies at 42

SHE SPENT HER EARLY YEARS playing in the backyard of a small house in Reno, Nev., learning more than Sign Language from the scientists who adopted her, and by age 5 she had mastered enough signs to impress the world's scientific and set off a debate over nonhuman primates' ability to learn human language that continues to this day.

But on Tuesday night, Washoe, a chimpanzee born in West Africa, died at age 42 after a short illness, said Mary Lee Jensvold, assistant director of the Chimpanzee and Human Communication Institute at Central Washington University in Ellensburg, where Washoe had lived and learned for more than two decades.

Scientists had tried without success to teach nonhuman primates to master vocal sounds when Dr. Allen Gardner and Beatrix T. Gardner, cognitive researchers, adopted the 10-month-old chimp from military scientists in 1966. The Gardners, skeptical that other primates could adequately speak human words, taught Washoe

WASHOE, believed to be the first nonhuman to acquire human language, at

American Sign Language, reasoning her gestures until the hands signs that were reliably understandable.

One claim, that Washoe signed "water" and "bird" upon seeing a swan "was like getting an SOS from outer space," the Harvard psychologist Roger Brown said at the time.

Many scientists still are not convinced. But all agree that Washoe, named for the county in Nevada where she spent her early years, prompted all the excitement and debate even if she did not answer all the questions her abilities raised. NYT

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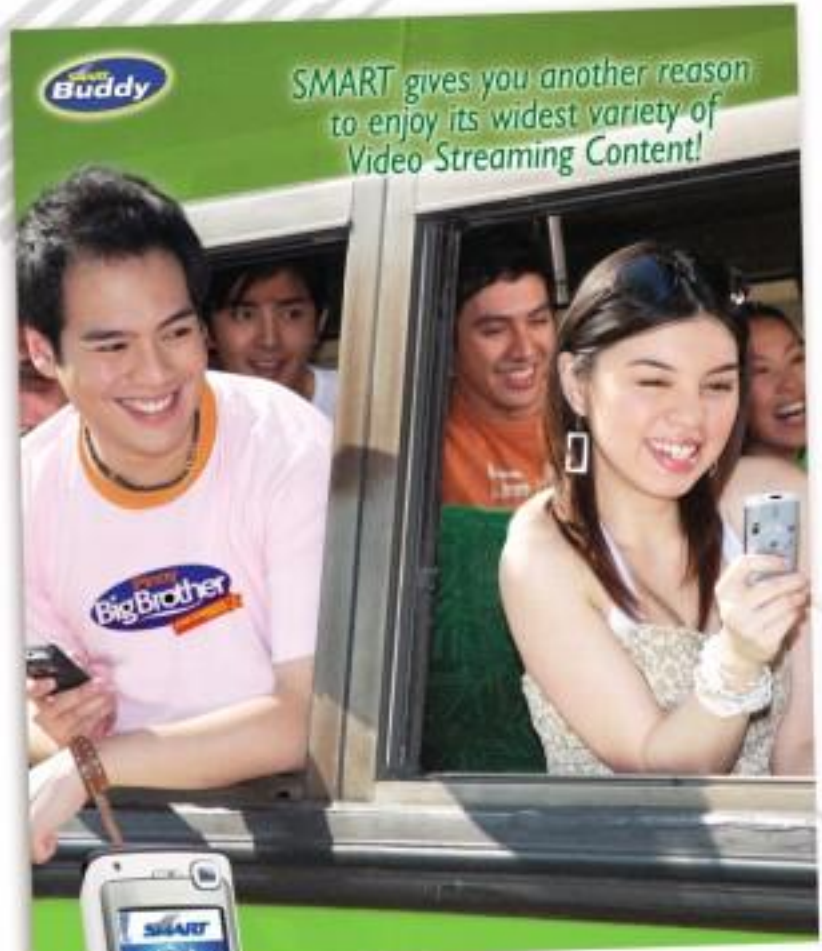

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Tañamor nails ticket to Beijing

WAR OF WORDS Harry Tañamor (in red) evades a right hook from Tajik Sherali Dostiev.

Scores close win over Tajik, but Basadre, Payla miss bus

By Dennis M. Eros, Inquirer Libre

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS—LIGHT flyweight Harry Tañamor became the first Filipino boxer to bag a slot in the 2008 Beijing Olympics with a close victory over Sherali Dostiev of Tajikistan and barged into the quarterfinals of the Aiba World Boxing Championships Wednesday here.

Both Tañamor, who at 19 is the senior member of the seven-man SEA GAMES-bound squad, and Dostiev played neat and tax, with neither fighter throwing wimping punches to waste.

The 4-4 deadlock at the end of the bout indicated the completion of the low-scoring match with the hands-neutral Filipino emerging triumphant only after the judges declared him as the more aggressive fighter.

But Tañamor's triumph was overshadowed by the losses suffered by flyweight Velito Payla and light-welter Gerardo Basadre in the round of 16.

Payla fought gamely, but failed to impress the judges in bowing to homegrown bet Sharlabov Mamon via a surprisingly lopsided, 11-2 decision.

Basadre never recovered from a shaky start and took a stinging defeat at the hands of Armenian-resident Hrachik Javakyan, 6-17.

Joyous yells of "Mabuhay ang Pilipinas" reverberated inside the University of Illinois-Chicago Pavilion after Tañamor was declared the winner and the fighter whooped it up with coaches Pet Gaspi and Ronald Chavez.

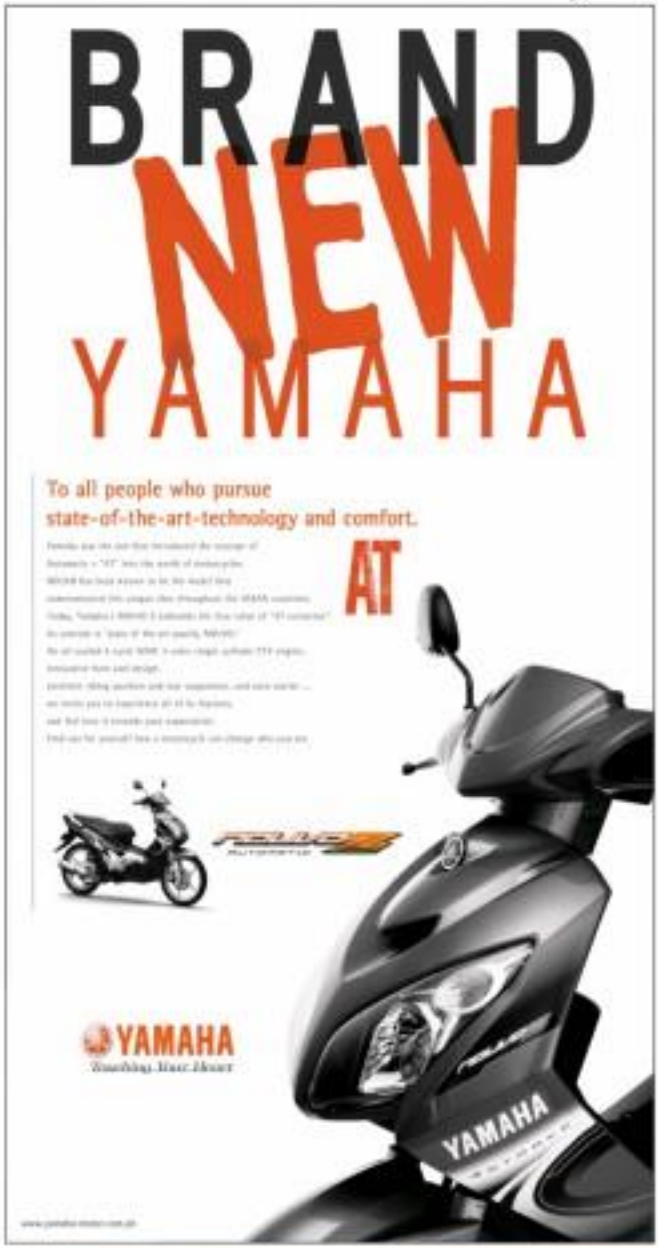
"Dostiev was looking for the smallest opening or an error," Tañamor, who reported over the entire fight jag he beat in the 2004 Athens Olympics, said in Filipino.

"He was very, very cautious and I had to beat him in his own game. I'm really happy to win this one."

Tañamor's Beijing wins would duplicate the feat of Brenner Brit, who now serves in three Summer Games. The Army sergeant from Zamboanga City is looking for his first Olympic medal in Beijing after fruitless campaigns in Athens and in the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

"Hopefully I can get a medal in the, jog—that's my dream," said Tañamor, who

TAÑAMOR/A31



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QUE: The ex-tie dies coming home

Que fires 67, trails Singapore leaders by 1

THE PHILIPPINES' ANGELO QUE gunned down three birdies evening in for a four-under par 67 and stood a stroke off the lead at start of the Barclay's Singapore Open Thursday at the Sentosa Golf and Country Club in Singapore.

Australia's Gavin Flint and Kane Webber and Jbe Park of the United States opened the big surprise as each shot a five-under par 66 to set the pace in the $1-million event.

Que's bogey-free round left him in solo fourth place as he spearheaded a Philippine charge that saw three of his compatriots shooting par or better. Que had birdies at holes No. 4, 10, 12 and 16.

Mars Pinoy, fresh off a top 30 finish in a China stop of the Asian Tour, and Anthony Fernando, the reigning Philippine Amateur champion and one of the tournament "subtes," joined a logjam at 1138 place with one-under 70s.

With them in that group were Vijay Singh—who had an eagle two at the ninth—and defending champion Adam Scott.

Jovic Pagunsan, who won his maiden Asian Tour crown in last week's Indonesia Pendirect Invitational, matched par 71 and was crammed in 24th spot.

Frankie Miñoza, who ruled the ABC Championship in Japan also last week, shot a two-over 73, and tied for 52nd spot.

Olaf Hellestrom was the best placed of the big name players, but a double-bogey ultimately cost him a share of the lead, and he finished in three under along with Scott's China's KJ Choi and Japan's Teruji Hamada.

Tony Lascuña had a 76. Antonio Macrakanchi had a 77 and Gerald Rosales shot a 78. Arnano Ubaldanis was five over after 11 holes. With a report from AP-Asian Tour

Giants tackle dangerous Dragons crew

AFTER WATCHING NELSONE DIMOLESI Barangay Ginebra in an out-of-form routine, Purefoods looms it will take many shots and renewed focus to hold off the Dragons.

The Giants stake their spotless record when they take on a horde of Dragons whose free-breathing wars recently handed a first victim to the latest Philippine Basketball Association Philippine Cup at the Cuneta Astrodome.

After ringing the bell with a quiet cycle of two, Welcon bounced back big time, ending the game against Ginebra with 13 straight points to pull off an 82-66 upset and log its first victory in an out-of-town match held in Tuguegarao City.

"We hope the luck we had against Ginebra could carry in this game," said Welcon coach Leo Austria.

But while the Dragons are pinning their hopes on Lady Luck, the Giants hope to stretch their three-game winning streak with the same kind of intensity they have shown thus far.

Coach Ryan Gregorio said the Giants, who are coming off a hard-earned victory over Magnolia, reserved to raise the Dragons the way they did the powerhouse Beer Age Masters.

"I cautioned my players that Welcon is capable of pulling off a win," said Gregorio. "We should treat them with respect on the same level as the strongest teams in the league."

Sta. Lucia Realty, which also pulled off an upset in a 87-67 conquest of the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals, is also gunning for win No. 2 when the Realtors go up against Red Bull in the other game.

Fresh from a 95-84 victory over the ASCI Express on Wednesday the Bulls are seeking to tie idle Magnolia at second place with coach Tony Gozon again hoping to share the most out of his trade-stripped unit.

"We'll try to win as many games as we can and see what happens," said Gozon. Aura Navarro

MISJUDGING Coca-Cola forward Alfred Pado elects to pass under pressure from Magnolia's Dondon Hontiveros in a recent match. ALEXANDER DIMAANO

STANDINGS	W	L
Purefoods	3	1
Magnolia	3	1
Red Bull	3	1
Talk 'N Text	2	1
Welcon	1	1
Sta. Lucia	1	2
Ginebra	1	2
ASCI	1	2
Coca-Cola	1	2
Air21	0	3

GAMES TODAY
(Cuneta Astrodome)
4:30 p.m.—Welcon vs Purefoods
7:30 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs Red Bull
Finality in Elite Div.

Asia's sports chief to visit RP in March

MACAU—OLYMPIC COUNCIL OF ASIA president Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah on Thursday said he will visit Manila in March next year to confer with Philippine Olympic Committee head Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, reducing the chances of Cojuangco's ouster.

Sheikh Ahmad relayed his message to POC secretary general Steve Hontiveros, who said the news validated OCA's support to Cojuangco after a stalemate report linked the POC to an alleged misuse of an OCA grant.

"There are many issues to be discussed, including the Asian Games schedule which the Philippines will host in 2019," Hontiveros quoted Sheikh Ahmad as saying.

"[The sheikh] will also see what other support the NOC needs."

Ahmad named Cojuangco as replacement to Thailand's Sing Tiong Chuan Arthaditaya Jarun, who is now OCA vice president.

Cojuangco will have three seats in the OCA president or important matters.

SK expat rules Forest Hills golf

ANYANG—KOREAN BUM JONG KIM bagged the masterpiece division 1 title of the recent Forest Hills Chairman's Cup even as club member Gene Sebastian drawn away with the biggest prize in the tournament held at the golf course's Jack Nicklaus-designed layout.

Kim edged out countryman Jun Young Ito in the tournament proper and Fil-Ipinoist Marcos Ilio Pitoy which used the Stableford scoring.

Carlo Reyes edged out Allan Pap for the division 2 championship, while Joel Aglesinig topped division 3 over Christopher Ong.

Sebastian, meanwhile, won the Hyundai Gene that was raffled off during the awarding ceremonies graced by internationally acclaimed performer Eddie Gutierrez.

The tournament, held in honor of club chairman Ferdinand Santos, drew a banner field of 250 players made up of members and their guests.

"We at the club would like to thank everyone who made this event a resounding success," Santos, a lawyer, said. "We expect to make this event one of the country's biggest."

Trinity Encano, business manager of barrister Filipino pro Frankie Minoza, tipped Young Angeles for the Guest division title.

Harbour-RP squad 'still lacks killer instinct'

By Jasmine W. Paya

PAFFENDAL COACH JUNEL BICULI believes the Harbour-Philippine Team's 63-81 defeat one day last week will not hamper the Harbour team Games events.

"There's still no killer instinct," said Bicull, who has little over a month left to prepare the team for the SEAG meets basketball action in Thailand.

"There is a level of play where we want to way. But we have to maintain that level if we want to win."

Bicull said the lack of aggressiveness has been evident in the first games it played in a guest team in the PBL-Viva Extreme Energy Drink Cup.

"Scoring is not a problem, but we must have the heart to defend," said Bicull after the Harbour-RP Team improved its record to 3-3, but not after surviving Toyota Balintawak.

The nationals will play three more PBL games before leaving for their 5-mid overseas training in Singapore on Nov. 18, less than a month after their tune-up series in Seoul, Korea.

"We have to buckle down to work, we have to work on our defense," said Bicull, who entrusted to pro Ifeti Ottaneo's leadership and Jason Castro's consistency.

"We wanted some of our DIMCI opponents, height won't be a problem, especially with Ottaneo around," said Bicull. "He took the role of the leader because he knows most of his teammates are young."

Completing the 12-man roster are Sherish Catubig, Jonathan Fernandez, Hans Belga, Chad Alontaga, Jeff Chan, Dirk dela Cuesta, Eugene Tan, Benet Bautista and Allan Intengan.

Tañamor nails ticket to Beijing

From page A13

immediately called his wife Jocyzie in Cebu (Wan City) to break the good news.

Tañamor gave his a semifinal berth on Thursday against Asian Games gold medalist Lee Hwan, who whipped Australian Stephen Sutherland via a referee stopped contest compulsory score limit (RSC-CCL).

It was close right from the opening bell that both Tañamor and Hwan were not in the mood to risk it up. They stood each other all throughout until Tañamor threatening scored all left straights at border, who stunned and revealed his keeping his distance.

The score was 9-9 after the first two minutes of action, before Hwan drew first blood with a right straight. As Hwan moved in to attack before the second round ended, Tañamor scored with a left straight to tie the score.

The second stopped in shows as another left straight gave the Filipino a 2-1 lead early in the third round.

Bored with the lack of action despite 40-sec the session, the referee decided to penalize both fighters, giving Tañamor a slim 4-3 lead.

A Dexter-style straight sent the score at 5-4 with three 33 seconds to go.

Hwan didn't have a chance against Hwan, who became the first American boxer in 39 years to secure a berth in two Olympics.

The Filipino trailed Wheeler, 15, at the end of second round and was behind, 3-13, before throughout the match.

"Pag-ka gaw si his here shot," said a disappointed Lopez. "He made scoring punches that weren't counted during his comeback."

Rosales fell behind early, 9-9, against the Armenian and never recovered.

ADAMSON'S Ina Pascual (L) and Karla Bello (insert at attack by Letran's Gwen Avelaya in Tuesday's match). Adamson wins. ROMEO CELIS JR.

Ateneo, Adamson tossers clash for 2nd semis berth

ATENEO AND ADAMSON University dispute the second semifinal berth in the 2007 Shakey's V-League women's volleyball second conference meeting today at The Arena in San Juan.

STANDINGS	W	L
UST	5	0
CEU	5	1
Ateneo	3	2
Adamson	3	2
La Salle	2	3
Letran	1	4
FEU	1	4
UPHSD	0	5

GAMES TODAY
(The Arena, San Juan)
2 p.m.—Ateneo vs Adamson
4:30 p.m.—Letran vs FEU
Finality in Elite Div.

Carrying 3-1 records along with Ateneo, Adamson will battle for Tomas Tigerman, the Lady Eagles clash with the Lady Falcons at 2 p.m.

Undefeated San Sebastian College clinched the first slot after notching its fourth straight setback in the opener of La Salle last Tuesday, 25-20, 25-23, 25-19.

La Salle tries to bounce back from that loss against Letran in the 4 p.m. match. The Lady Archers only have a victory to show in three games while the Lady Falcons have yet to win after four starts.

That game player, Adamson Kristine will lead the Lady Eagles move while Patricia Tagaran, Chaira Arriesta, Karla Bello and Divine Acevedo will provide support.

Ateneo, meanwhile, will open its campaign with 5-0 and 6-0 to the leading Shakey with 10.

Adamson reinforcements Kristine Santos and teammates Diana Lagrimas, Angela Imperial, Jacqueline Ko and Jill Gonzales will spearhead the Lady Falcons' challenge.

A win by dominating champion La Salle will assure Letran of a playoff. A semifinal race while boosting their chances for the remaining three seats.

The Lady Pirates, who hosted the Lady Archers in the battle for third last conference, may force a playoff for a semifinal slot if they sweep their last three games.

Letran's remaining opponents are Letran on Nov. 4 and hosts Ateneo on Nov. 11. Romeo S. Asuncio

Last Milo 21K qualifier kicks off in Baguio Sunday

TWENTY-TWO GOWN, ONE TO GO.

The elimination stage of the 21st National Milo Marathon comes to an end this Sunday in Baguio City.

More than 300 runners have already qualified for the 2007 season's grand climax on Nov. 10 in Metro Manila from the center of 21K races in the provinces and the 42K in Metro Manila on July 22.

The last six finalists—the top three in both men and women's events—will be known in the race that will start and end at Burnham Park.

Aside from slots to the grand finals, the top finishers will also receive trophies and cash prizes.

According to Sonia Mil and Milo sports events executive Tin Encarnacion, a total cash prize of P1,10,000 will be given away to the top 10 winners as well as to the top three in the 16 for 16 and 50 race for kids.

Runners in the 16 race will have one hour to finish the race. The 21K race will have a cut-off time of two hours and 30 minutes.

Also scheduled in the Sunday's festivities are the inter-school running contest and the three-dance competition.

The last time the Milo eliminations run was held in Baguio City was in September 2004.

Local organizer Tourism Int Moses has invited Vice Mayor Daniel Fariñas to fire off the over 4,000 runners at 6 a.m. He will also be on hand to award the

Chiang Kai Shek bags WNCAA junior title

KAREN BERNICE COLUMNA bunged in 31 points and Chiang Kai Shek College avenged its loss to Mirriam College last year with a 63-57 overtime victory over the weekend to win the junior basketball crown of the 38th WNCAA season at the St. Scholastica's College gym in Manila.

With Columna scoring from all angles, the Lady War Dragons were completed a remarkable comeback after chopping Game 1 in the Mirriam encounter, 71-69.

CKSC tied the series by the slimmest of margins, 69-68, in Game 2.

The 16-year-old Columna, along with teammates Tiffany Mae Ng, Wendy Go and Katherine Medly, played her last season with the Lady War Dragons.

Mirriam's rampant runs kept the title race from Sacred College Alabang in Games One, 11-38, and Three, 39-19.

Host Lyceum, Bicol Technological University and De La Salle Zobel have seen two WNCAA titles each in various sports. Emilio Aguinaldo College Manila, Mirriam, CKSC and St. Scholastica have entered one each.

Lyceum defended its Senior A basketball and futsal crowns and DLSU retained its junior futsal title while streaming Sacred Heart to midget volleyball champions.

[DOWNS] Ercudo, in Nonoy Alcano's opinion, has the greatest chance of thwarting a Taiwanese rule in the World Pool Championship.

WORLD POOL CHAMPIONSHIP

Taiwanese aces plane in early

By Mussey R. Castillo

IF PREPARATION IS THE KEY TO WINNING THE 2007 World Pool Championship, the formidable Taiwanese delegation may have gotten a headstart, planing into the country last week and dumpsterizing their skills to Date hotel for the event that starts tomorrow at the Araneta Coliseum.

"They've been here, at least more than a week ago," defending champion Ronnie Alcano of the Philippines told the bounce yesterday to Filipino. "They are playing in so many nonstop games in their hotels, which has created a World Pool atmosphere."

Alcano heads the formidable Philippine charge in the $400,000 event and the 25-year-old, who won the title over Germany's Ralf Souquet last year, reckoned that if it is not a Filipino who will win, it will be a Taiwanese, like teen star Wu Chia-ching.

Eleven "The Magician" Reyes, Francisco "Django" Bustamante and 2004 winner Alex Pagulayan are also in there for Philippine teams, though Alcano had said that it is Jeremy Jacobs who seems to be the best bead bet from far.

"He [Jacobs] has been making so much money against the foreigners lately [in the hotels]," Alcano said with a laugh. "Parang sa palabas but we go for it in the tournament."

There will be a total of 48 countries to be represented in the tournament that stakes $100,000 to the winner and the United States, led by the omnipresent Earl Strickland, and former champion Johnny Archer, has the most entries with 11.

The field of 128 players will be divided into 16 groups of eight players each using the double elimination format with a one-on-9 affair, winners breaking.

It will be a unique elimination since two straight wins will make the player advance to the round-of-64, while two straight losses take them to the showers regardless of the outcome of their other matches.

The final set of matches in the group will honour players with one win and one defeat with winners advancing and the losers eliminated.

Top seeds Alcano, Soquet picked to bag $100,000

THE FINALISTS IN LAST YEAR'S World Pool Championships have been installed as the heavy favorites to bag the $100,000 winner's purse in the 2007 edition which blasts off tomorrow at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, Quezon City.

Defending champion Ronnie Alcano, the lanky 30-year-old from Calamba, Laguna, has been seeded first as expected, with 2006 runner-up Ralf Soquet of Germany getting the No. 2 seeding.

Fresh off his runner-up finish in the US Open won by American Shane Van Boening, Alcano opens his bid for back-to-back titles against Iride Imeran H. Saeed Ahmed Al-Mutawa of the United Arab Emirates.

Souquet battles Filipino qualifier Gerardo Avelino, the same man he disposed of in the first round last year.

Chinese Taipei's Wu Chia-ching, the 2005 champion and compatriot Ning Ching-shun were installed as the third and fourth seeds of the tournament that also includes a $40,000 prize for the runner-up.

The third place position $20,000, the fourth place $15,000 and the fifth to 20th finisher $4,500 each.

Sentimental favorite and 1999 winner Efren "Bata" Reyes was seeded sixth, two steps ahead of Alex Pagulayan, the Cavitenio-based Filipino from Gibraltar, Isabela, who beat Taiwanese Chang Jui-sui for the 2006 championship.

The other seeded players Thorsten Hohmann, Germany (9th); Chang Jung-lin, Chinese Taipei (seeded); Thomas Engert, Germany (10th); Konstantin Stepanov, Russia (11th); Antonio Gabica, Spain (12th); Dennis Orcollo, Philippines (13th); Li Hewen, China (14th); Lukasz Kolsut, Poland (15th); Niels Feijen, Netherlands (16th); Chris Bryan, England (17th); Mika Immonen, Finland (18th); Ko Pin-yi, Chinese Taipei (19th); Mike Rubin, USA (20th); Rodion Bikov, Russia (21st/24th).

Also host Efren Reyes, Lucio Basilio

COMMENTARY

Quo vadis Pacquiao, the compulsive puncher

By Hermie Rivera

OK, MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA, STUBBORNLY DEFLEDGED for 12 rounds, gave Manny Pacquiao an unexpected surprise when he lasted the distance in their rematch before a roaring Las Vegas crowd at the Mandalay Bay Events Center.

But the closer we get to the Mayweather-Pacquiao match from comparative punching to frenzy beating—an ingenious gameplan that frustrated Marco despite his lack of finesse.

The Pacman's previous knockout wins have left an impact on his foes who've come to expect abbreviated endings in all of his fights.

Asked why he deviated from his usual norm, the Gerdon thug-gee lived back, rather quizzically: "You don't want your ass kicked by a solid brute, do you?"

Fittingly, Pacquiao's last-minute conquest of Barrera closed the book on one of Mexico's legends.

John Abraldes of the San Acendo Express earlier wrote that a Pacquiao victory was certain since the Philippines' boxer magnum is just "too strong, too explosive and too dynamic."

I think Jim Lampley says more emphatic: "The Filipino boxing idol is just "too fast, too strong and too good."

But Pacquiao's first-crop four-pound performance in his weight class Manny has demolished the junior lightweight division thus roughly that a move to the lightweight ring looks imminent.

Categorical at times as super featherweight, the 120-pound swing was created for fighters who find it too wide to bridge the gap between featherweight (126 lbs.) and lightweight (135 lbs.).

Since tightening his grip on this weight insecurities, the 28-year-old phenomenon is being lured to move up for big money fights against WBC lightweight boss David Diaz or unbeaten boss "Baby Bull" Diaz, no-nigonsense, hard hitting Mexican who could put the crowd for a huge payday.

There is also an ongoing scuffle among the other aspirants to both weight alterations to earn a bout for a crack.

Most who is likely to have the first crack at Pacquiao's crown of feature?

While Juan Manuel Marquez was almost stopped by Manny Pacquiao on two occasions debatable done, he remained unbeaten in his last six fights, to include his pilferage of Marco Barrera's crown at the MGM Grand.

Deserving?

Not quite.

The knock on Marquez is that he's overrating. Whether this is an accurate reflection of his style or not will be known only if he gets pitched to Pacquiao's prime challenger.

Promoter Bob Arum has given Manny authority to negotiate what's needed with his new archenemy.

Cool!

Maglaro? If his much?

Swim prodigy has makings of a star

By Jane Navarro

CHRISTINE GRACE TAN HAS spent the greater part of her childhood reading school books and floating leisurely in the pool.

But the 14-year-old swimming prodigy doesn't mind doing the same exercises over and over again, especially now that the dividends of hard work and dedication are beginning to trickle in.

Tan was the most promising athlete of the recent Philippine Olympic Festival-Bicol Southern Tagalog qualifying games after earning away a total of 32 gold medals for Batangas.

Tan's impressive gold rush by winning the 100m freestyle, 100m backstroke, 400m freestyle, 400m individual medley before adding the 200m IM, 200m butterfly, 50m freestyle, 200m backstroke, 100m free and 100m breaststroke in her bag.

On the final day of swimming competition, Tan capped her scintillating performance by meeting two more gold medals in the 400m freestyle and 100m butterfly for gold 14 total number country.

The feat was a product of a grind that included a daily step to the pool at sunrise, school sessions at midday and slipping back into her swimsuit late in the afternoon until darkness covers the Trace Subdivision Complex in Los Baños, Laguna, where she is based.

"I love doing it because I really want to swim for the national team," said Tan, whose magnetic looks and athletic 5-foot-5 frame invites comparisons to Akiko Thomson or Christine Jacobs.

A three-time Olympian and former Southeast Asian Games gold medalist during the 90s, Thomson was once swimming's power girl.

Jacobs, on the other hand, flourished as one of the country's top Asian Games bets in the 80s before trying her hand at show business.

The bashful Tan, who started swimming at age seven, has the same winning attitude plus the features.

The daughter of a banker from Lipa City Tan was discovered by scouts from the national team during the Palarong Pambansa held in Roxas and City, Southern Cotabato. She months ago after anchoring Batangas to a golden effort in the 1x100-meter freestyle relay.

Tan, a Palaro campaigner since she was 11 years old in 2004, was brought to Tinoc, the bowling ground for future national swimmers. There, she regularly trains and studies.

"I'm allowed to go home during Saturdays and return immediately the following day," said Tan, whose relatives qualified her for the national finals of the PSP next month at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

She knows it's the perfect opportunity even if it means spending the previous moments of her childhood between schooling and training.

TRIN: Picture national swimmer.

QC CHESS SLATED

National Chess Federation of the Philippines executive director Samuel Reinos, Brandmaster Eugene Torre and Quezon City majority floor leader and 4th district councilor Aris Erlano (from left) sign the memorandum of agreement for the holding of the Quezon City International Chessfest at the Araneta Sports Complex on Dec. 13-16.

RP karters eye Asian karting crowns

THE PHILIPPINES HOPES TO KEEP ITS hot-ling dominance in the Asian region behind nine of the country's best young drivers who will be seeing action today in the fourth leg of the 2007 Asian Karting Open Championship that started yesterday in Bangkok, Thailand.

Karter of the year Juan Stefano Marcelo will be leading the country's campaign as he joins for a third straight victory in the premiere Formula 125 Seniors class of this prestigious international event.

The other members of the Philippine contingent are Mc Ar John and Christian Gaddi in the Cadet 60 Novice class, Gilbert John Calderon and Jet Racing's Rene Sarmiento and Francis Reyes in the Mini ROK division, Axel Bautista and Mmert John Saba in the ROK Junior and Formula 125 Juniors classes and Mike Gutierrez in the ROK Seniors.

Joining them is delegation head Johnny Tan refer's expecting the Philippines to dominate of the three riders at stake.

"We're proud of their excellent job in Italy where they proved Filipinos are equally competitive in karting," said Tan.

The 14-year-old Marcelo leads the race by the overall title and a win will firm up his spurs to preserve the Asian karting crown in Philippines' hands for the fourth straight year after Michele Sarmiento made it back-to-back in 2004 and 2006, and Markus Stockinger's title-clinching feat last year.

He narrowly holds a total of 75 points but could face a tough fight from Hong Kong-based Italian karter Luca Sergiani and Macau's Johnny Cecilio Afonso who are expected to unleash last ditch efforts to catch up as they trail in second and third with 51 and 50 points respectively.

Mc Ar Saba is eyeing the Cadet 60 crown where he leads with 130 points with Gaddi in second overall with 60 points.

Mmert John Saba is the current leader in the race for the ROK Junior crown.

China warns against unauthorized protests

BEIJING—CHINA WILL NOT TOLERATE UNAUTHORIZED PARADES, demonstrations or protests during next year's Olympics, a spokesman said Thursday. The announcement by Public Security Ministry press officer Wu Heping puts to rest fears a range of groups from rights activists to environmentalists who hope to harness the Games' visibility to publicize their causes. AP

SPORTS

Calzaghe, Kessler put records, belts on line

LONDON—JOE CALZAGHE AND MIKKEL KESSLER PUT THEIR UNBEATEN records on the line for their super middleweight unification bout Sunday at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium. Calzaghe is unbeaten in 22 fights while Dane Kessler sports a 50-0 record. Whatever ground is in front of an expected 50,000 plus crowd will melt away with all five super middleweight belts. Reuters

Spooked!

Mavs shut down LeBron, Cavs; Trade talks make Bulls jittery

CLEVELAND, OHIO—THE ORANGE-CLAD CLEVELAND Cavaliers couldn't overcome a frightening first half as they were outclassed by the Dallas Mavericks 92-74 in their season opener on Wednesday.

Cleveland got into the Halloween spirit by wearing their own orange uniforms but the Eastern Division champions couldn't muster any offense as their star LeBron James was held scoreless in a first half for the first time in his career.

James Terry scored 24 points for Dallas which was without Josh Howard after he was suspended two games for fighting in a preseason game.

"I thought we had an excellent first quarter, offensively and defensively. We tried to attack LeBron James," Dallas coach Avery Johnson said. "We had a pretty good training camp, and it carried over into this first game."

GAME TODAY
(Ambiel TV)
10:30 a.m.—Phoenix vs Seattle
(Courtesy of Fox)

Dirk Nowitzki scored 15 points and had six assists for Dallas, which jumped out to a 25-point lead in the third quarter.

Jerry Stackhouse scored 17 points and Devin Harris contributed 13 for Dallas.

The Mavericks suffered one of the most shocking upsets in the history of the playoffs last season after they lost to eighth seed Golden State in the first round.

James had his demons following him around all night long. He collected three fouls in the first half and didn't play in the last half of the second quarter.

"I thought it was a strong move," James said about his third foul, a charge into Nowitzki. "I got into the lane and I jumped straight up and [Nowitzki] got up underneath me and like offensive guys on a charge."

James split two free throws to score his first point in 30:09 of the third period and moments later hit his first field goal. He finished with 10 points on two-of-11 shooting.

"Dirk (Nowitzki) and Gana (Diop) protected the basket for us pretty well because even when [James] got down there, I thought we were in there," Johnson said.

At Orlando, Florida, Rashard Lewis scored 26 points and Hedo Turkoglu had 24 to lift the Magic past the Milwaukee Bucks, 102-93.

Orlando rookie and Milwaukee top pick Yi Jianlian had nine points and three rebounds in 22 minutes in his debut.

At Indianapolis, Jermaine Oneal scored 16 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter and overtime, and the Indiana Pacers won in coach Jim O'Brien's debut, 110-106, against the Washington Wizards.

At Toronto, Andrea Bargnani scored 20 points and the Toronto Raptors began defense of the Atlantic Division title with a 100-97 win over the Philadelphia 76ers.

Antawn Jamison and Milwaukee top pick Yi Jianlian had nine points and three rebounds in 22 minutes in his debut.

Richard Jefferson added 20 points, Vince Carter added 24 points and Jason Kidd handed out 13 assists to lead the Nets.

Ben Gordon had 27 points and Luol Deng added 22 for the Bulls, who have been distracted in recent days by rumors of a possible trade for Kobe Bryant.

At Memphis, Tennessee, Mason Gobbell scored 20 points, including the go-ahead basket with 52 seconds left, as the San Antonio Spurs rapped the Memphis Grizzlies, 104-101.

At New Orleans, Chris Paul had 22 points and 12 assists, while Deja Skylakoski added 19 points for the Hornets, who beat the Sacramento Kings, 104-90, in their first game returning to New Orleans full-time.

At Denver, Carmelo Anthony scored 32 points and hooked up Seattle rookie Kevin Durant in his NBA debut as the Nuggets routed the Supersonics, 120-103. AFP/AP

DEMARNA Diop (left) and Dirk Nowitzki (right) prove that the Mavericks can play defense by shooting down LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers on the way to a Halloween night victory. REUTERS

Lakers fans' boos: The sound of cracks in LA-Kobe relationship

AFTER publicly leaving his fault on the Lakers, the honeymoon between No. 24 and LA fans is over—and now Phil Jackson doesn't look capable of healing the rift. REUTERS

By Paul Oberjuerge
Los Angeles Times Star

LOS ANGELES—THE LOVE THAT WOULD last forever?

Dead.

The favorite son who could do no wrong? Severed.

Kobe Bryant as eternal pet of Los Angeles basketball fans?

Dropped off at the pound.

The start began over. This relationship is broken, probably irretrievably. And not even Dr. Phil—the couch is the dentist—seems capable of fixing it.

Kobe Bryant says arguments heard Tuesday night, of course, he's heard those before. He the wrath of an NBA crowd.

But never on his home court.

Never in Los Angeles, in front of Lakers fans.

Bryant had to the game said he expected coaching ovations when he was introduced to the crowd before the Lakers' season opener versus the Houston Rockets.

"I don't think it will be any different," were his exact words.

And the boos' exact words?

"Boo!"

Nobody realized this relationship had gone so wrong. That what looked like the ultimate marriage of athlete and city had turned out as thoroughly flawed as Sam.

Funny how no one saw it coming.

Phil Jackson didn't, either. Asked how Bryant would be received just before myself, the Lakers coach said, "I think it will be the same. Our fans are dedicated."

Within the hour, Stephen Cooper was sobbing with boos and catcalls aimed at No. 24 in purple and gold, almost a shocking concept.

It was like the Pope getting booed in St. Peter's Basilica. Even Jesus booted all the stage in Las Vegas.

It just as if Lakers fans didn't have sweat. Bryant's leap saved the franchise through a turbulent summer with his demands to be traded, his embrace of Lakers ownership, management and teammates.

He never really apologized, never really returned his trade demand, and sometime between June and Tuesday night, the relationship public apparently decided it had heard and seen enough of his sweepstakes about his answer in a city that had done nothing but sacrificial crutch him.

Even as Bryant went seven-over-40 points in a 95-95 debut, finding really that almost salvaged the game, the crowd didn't respond to him the way it would have a year ago.

There were olive bowdy calls of "MVP"—a sad and ultimate echo of the roaring, adoring chants that once rocked Staples Center.

Bryant has wrecked his relationship with Laker fans. The only solution is a Bryant trade. For whatever the Lakers can get in return.

Only then will Kobe fans forgive Bryant again—when he is wearing something other than a Lakers uniform.

Federer leads march of stars; Djokovic gets the boot

FEDERER AP

BASEL—TOP-SEEDED ROGER FEDERER beat Ivo Karlovic of Croatia, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3, Wednesday to reach the third round of the Swiss Indoors and earn a chance to avenge his loss in three Wimbledon wins from two weeks ago.

The 12-time Grand Slam champion has reached the final of every tournament he's entered since losing to Filippo Volandri in the third round of the Rome Masters on May 12.

"I came here a big favorite and I'm on a great run again, having played only finals since many months," Federer said.

Wolfsburg has been Federer for the Madrid Masters title on Dec. 23, thereby one than of the last five, Federer has to 8-7 edge over the Argentine, who advanced after beating 14th-seeded Carlos Moya, 6-4, 6-4.

Federer has already qualified for the season-ending Tennis Masters Cup, along with Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic, Nikolay Davydenko, Andy Roddick and David Ferrer.

Only two of eight spots remain open, and James Blake of the United States and Richard Gasquet of France also are still in contention. They will meet in the third round Thursday.

The ninth-seeded Blake beat Nicolas Mahut of France, 6-7 (5), 7-6 (4), 6-3, and the 10th-seeded Gasquet topped Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, 7-5, 7-6 (3).

Meanwhile, Djokovic was ousted from the Paris Masters, losing to French veteran Fabrice Santoro, 6-3, 6-2, in the second round.

Nadal overcame an early to break to easily beat Filippo Volandri, 6-3, 6-1, and reach the third round.

Vaidisova injures wrist, drops out

QUEBEC CITY—TOP-seeded Nicole Vaidisova dropped out of the Bell Challenge on Wednesday night because of a right-wrist injury after splitting the first two sets with Czech compatriot Renata Voracova. Vaidisova won the opening set, 6-2, then fell, 6-3, in the second before dropping play in the first-round match. In a late second-round match, second-seeded Nora Zvonareva of Russia beat France's Severine Beltrame, 6-3, 7-6 (6). AP

mobile news

BUSINESS

Editor Raul G. Marvelo • Assistant Editor Carrie S. Nemenzo

GO BUSINESS WITH MILLIONS OF MOBILE PHONE USERS.
Kodak

Forex reserves seen at $31B by yearend

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo chats with ACS president and CEO Victor Dodaro at the inauguration of the Advanced Contact Solutions call center in Ayala Center, Cebu. [illegible]

Boost to come from 4th quarter OFW inflows

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS SEES THE COUNTRY'S foreign exchange reserves surging to $31 billion by the end of the year given strong inflows expected in the fourth quarter.

A BSP official also said that the central bank would review its projections on the gross international reserves as well as the balance of payments (BOP) this November in time for the annual policy discussions with a visiting mission from the International Monetary Fund.

"We'll see if we can retain or revise (the forecasts) in connection with the forthcoming IMF meetings," the official said.

The two-week session with a Washington-based IMF mission as a member of the Washington-based multilateral institution is scheduled on Nov. 29 to Dec. 11.

The official estimated that the GIR level, which has breached the BSP's full-year forecast of $30 billion as of mid-August, could rise further to the $31 billion by year's end.

FINANCE B2

BSP says credit crunch had little impact on RP

THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY HAS FLOURISHED well the recent global financial volatility caused by the US credit crunch that peaked in August, based on the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' assessment.

In a recently released report on the US subprime crisis, the BSP said the impact on the domestic real sector of the higher interest risk premium had been "relatively small and indirect" just as it had expected.

The credit squeeze in the US that spooked global markets was caused by high delinquencies among subprime mortgage credit or housing loans given to borrowers with diminished credit histories and little equity.

"In the Philippines, local markets experienced some degree of volatility mainly due to rising risk aversion but subsequently showed signs of gradual easing beginning in September," the BSP report said.

The local stock market saw a dramatic decline in share prices as the benchmark index fell to a low 2,666.3 on Aug. 17 from a high of 3,791.4 on July 5 (Thursday).

MSP SEES B2

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Fed cuts benchmark rate /B8
IT spending in healthcare industry seen to increase /B8

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 43.073 = $ 1

As of 4 p.m. Oct. 31, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

OCTOBER

(For more market reports see Page B3)

Markets closed

FINANCIAL MARKETS WERE CLOSED Thursday and Friday for public holidays and trading will resume on Monday.

Stocks fell Wednesday, the last of the 5-trading-day week, as the long weekend spurred profit-taking in moderately heavy volume. Monday was a holiday for nationwide village elections.

The decline was also partly due to worries over a possible hyperlevel against Ayala Land Inc. in connection with last month's deadly shopping-mall explosion.

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INVESTMENT FIRM TO GET $25M

ATR Kim Eng wins vs LBC in US bankruptcy court

By Dante L. Lucas

THE US BANKRUPTCY COURT FOR THE Southern District of California ruled recently that the $24.49-million liability of LBC USA president Hugo Bonilla to publicly listed ATR Kim Eng Financial Corp. and ATR Kim Eng Capital Partners Inc. is "non-dischargeable" despite his filing for bankruptcy.

The bankruptcy court ruling means that Bonilla remains liable to ATR Kim Eng even after all his assets are fully liquidated and paid to the financial services company amid the final order to fully complied with, ATR Kim Eng said in a statement.

It will be recalled that in December 2006, the Court of Chancery of the State of Delaware ruled in favor of ATR Kim Eng in its case against LBC chair Carlos Araneta, LBC Bank president Lito Bonoyaber and Bonilla for waste and breach of fiduciary duty over the disappearance of substantial assets of LBC Global Corp., the Delaware-based holding company of the LBC Group.

The court ordered them to jointly and severally pay ATR Kim Eng the amount of $24.49 million, representing a damages award and pre-judgment interest, plus post-judgment interest and collection costs.

The Delaware judgment was subsequently registered in the Alameda County Superior Court in California for enforcement, and this has resulted in the recovery of cash from Bonilla in the amount of $536,000, or roughly P25 million.

Bonilla had often filed for bankruptcy and asked the court to dismiss the claim of ATR Kim Eng, contending that a corporate director is not a fiduciary.

A fiduciary is defined as an individual, corporation or association holding assets for another party with the legal authority and duty to make decisions regarding financial matters on behalf of the other party. The bankruptcy court ruled against his contention.

"The ruling is the latest in the series of positive developments in our effort to settle this issue," said ATR Kim Eng director and executive vice president Renato Lewenia. "We are hopeful that our other efforts at enforcing the judgment will likewise be successful."

Lewenia said that they had also started enforcement activities in the Philippines. He said that the company had filed actions at the Regional Trial Court of Makati aimed at preventing the fraudulent transfer of assets of Araneta and co-defendants.

Apart from Araneta and his family, also named defendants in these motions were LBC Development Corp., LBC Express Inc., LBC Development Bank and LBC Properties Inc.

Corporate gifts

AFTER TODAY'S COMMISSIONS, rest of All Souls' Day, the run-up begins for the celebrations of the happiest time of the year in our country.

At the start of the "ber" months, some radio and TV stations made a countdown to Christmas.

They even played excerpts of popular Christmas carols.

The shopping malls were not left behind in trying to create a mainstream for the Christmas spirit, otherwise known as shopping fever, ahead of the giving of the Christmas bonus to the employees.

The merchandisers are aggressively pushing their sales in the remaining months of the year which usually account for almost a quarter of their annual revenue.

At the same time, the companies have to make available the funds needed to greet their 13th month pay (plus Christmas bonus if they have been their practice) obligation to their employees, and to buy gifts for their valued patrons and customers.

It's not easy deciding on who to include in the corporate gift list and what to give.

Usually, a committee is formed to discuss and resolve these questions.

Failure to include somebody's name in the list or giving the wrong kind of gift could have adverse effects on the whole standup of the company with the affected persons.

Native materials

Corporate gift-giving has become serious business that PR outfits include "gift counselling" to the menu of services they offer to their clients.

Often, the quality of the gifts is made directly proportional to the recipient's position in the corporate hierarchy or the amount of money he/she generated to the giver.

While this benchmark is widely observed in the business community, some corporations have deviated from this norm without dampening the spirit of the holiday celebration.

For these "deviants," Christmas presents an opportunity to engage in meaningful corporate social activities, or a chance to help the less fortunate members of our society while in the same time performing certain activities that are associated with the season.

Rather than give imported goods as gifts, some companies enter into arrangements with residents of depressed communities for the production of decorative sets made of indigenous materials, or the perpetuation of food items that the community is famous for.

Last year, the woodcarvings from trees that were uprooted by a strong typhoon that hit Southern Luzon were used as Christmas gifts by several Makati-based companies.

The wooden sets were placed in attractive boxes and came with a brief, but touching, description of the place where they came from and the people who worked on them.

The fallen trees that would have otherwise been left in rot were converted to works of art that gave livelihood to a typhoon-ravaged community.

Food products

Knowing the Filipinos' appetite for food during Christmas, a company engaged in the remittance business ordered native cakes, or bibingka, from a town in Bulacan and gave them out as gifts to its clients.

A friend of mine who lives in Pampanga told me that as early as August, many households in his community are busy filling orders for pastillas, puberson and other sweet-tasting products by corporations that use them as Christmas giveaways.

For me, the most imaginative gifts I heard of are the batteries, or parol, that a company gave its customers and, to top it all, delivered to their houses.

I'm not sure if the company subsidized it for the batteries free of charge. If it did, that's really service de luxe! I'm sure the recipients will not forget the gesture for a long time.

Although the ad imperatives for the proliferation of these products are intended to cover the Yuletide season only, the positive effects of the livelihood projects go beyond that period.

Most, if not all, of the originally conceived seasonal entrepreneurial activities develop into long-term businesses for the affected households or communities.

Donations

Going one step further, some companies donate instead the money they have set aside for gifts to charitable institutions that, in their opinion, can benefit most from the financial assistance.

The people in the corporation's gift list receive a letter stating that in lieu of a gift, a donation was made in their name to that institution.

The letter is usually accompanied by a note from the head of the institution acknowledging the donation with thanks.

There are other ways by which corporations can engage in corporate social responsibility this season without looking like the farmer who eats Christmas.

All it takes is to refer to the list of foundations or non-governmental organizations accredited by the Department of Social Welfare and Development and find out which of them have projects or activities that can use the money reserved for corporate gifts.

On a personal note, whenever I buy gifts for Christmas, I make it a point to go native.

I prefer to see my money go to the pocket of Filipino workers than to the foreign workers who manufactured the imported products. (For feedback, please write to rpublico@hotmail.com.ph.)

IBM cited as top QC taxpayer

IBM PHILIPPINES INC. HAS ONCE AGAIN been recognized as one of the top business taxpayers of Quezon City for 2006, following six consecutive years of being on the list.

The citation was presented to IBM chief financial officer Rommel D. Silva by the Quezon City government headed by Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. in a ceremony held recently at the Quezon Plaza Cafeteria Hotel.

IBM Philippines is one of the principal locators within Eastwood City in Libis. Several other business interests of the company – its BPO and call center units, have also made Quezon City their base.

"At IBM Philippines, we value integrity and transparency," Silva said in accepting the award. "That is the way we do business, and being conscientious and honest with our tax obligations is something that we take seriously. It's also our way of giving back to the community we are in. This recognition inspires us to become an even better corporate citizen."

Business taxes were the largest revenue source of the Quezon City for 2006, according to Mayor Belmonte.

Aside from IBM Philippines, the other business taxpayers that were honored included Shareaser Inc., the Manila Electric Co., Security Drug Corp., ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., GMA Network Inc., the Araneta Group of Companies, Jollibee Foods Corp., Pacific Bulanz (Bayantel) Philippines and McDonald's Food Particulars holder Golden Arches Development Corp.

The tribute to the Top Business Taxpayers for 2006 was part of the city's 68th founding anniversary celebration.

This year's ceremony was attended by Vice President Noli de Castro who emphasized in his message that Quezon City is a model of good urban governance and effective revenue collection.

Quezon City is one of the primary business hubs in the country and in Metro Manila, he said.

Dante L. Lucas

'Boy Bawang' seeks to expand presence in Middle East market

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE MANUFACTURER OF THE ubiquitous fun-flavoring fried corn bits, or more popularly known as corn[illegible], is launching a wider range of products in the $12.5 billion dollar halal market in the Middle East.

According to the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions, the other local food makers will take part in the two-week International Food Exhibition (IFEX) Roadshow and Missions to the Middle East on Nov. 5-16.

IDK export manager Hillet Cabonce said Boy Bawang had been introduced in the Middle East in 2006 but joining the missions was meant to expand its presence in the Islamic countries.

Cabonce said IDK would promote its complete line of Boy Bawang products which now come in six flavors—garlic, hot garlic, adobo, barbecue, chili cheese and lechon manok—as well as launch its new Cowboy cuatro-and-pointe cookies and Little Giant meat egg cookies.

Earlier this year, small-scale cereal and chicken makers from Bicol were made further inroad for the product as they were able to tap markets in Cyprus, Australia and Saudi Arabia through the Department of Trade and Industry's One Town-One Product program.

Trade Undersecretary Cristeta C. Evangelista said overall was a popular food snack among Filipinos and the same was to bring the product to countries where there were large Filipino communities.

The other companies joining the mission are Fisher Farms (processed milkfish); Shoreline Foods Corp. (bottled preserves, processed marine products, noodles, frozen foods and vegetables); coconut products Fortress Food Manufacturing Corp. (canned goat meat products, canned vegetable products); Q-Phil Products International (noodles, bottled sweet preserves), and RPM Foods Corp. (canned meats, barbecue tuna, sweet noodles, flavored drinks, ice cream, processed meat).

Cabonce said the mission was composed of manufacturers and exporters with halal-certified products and which have plans of expanding their export base in the lucrative and large collective markets of the Gulf Cooperation Council member countries—Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Petron, Shell asked to pay Oct. tax liabilities

By Michelle V. Bunoz

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS SAID IT WAS asking Petron Corp. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. to settle their duty and tax liabilities for October worth P6.52 billion to help the agency meet its collection target for the month.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales said the BOC was collecting P2 billion from Petron and another P1.52 from Shell. He said the payments are crucial in meeting Customs' collection target for October.

"We are hoping to exceed our target for October and for the last two months of the year, so we are intensifying our collection efforts," Morales told reporters.

The BOC was tasked to collect P211.7 billion in duties and import taxes for October alone, for the entire year, the BOC is expected to raise at least P2.28.2 billion.

Morales said that as of last Friday, the BOC was still P4 billion short of its collection target for October. He said, however, that with the payments expected from Petron and Shell, and other smaller subsidiaries, the BOC had a chance of meeting its target for the month.

The government aims to limit its budget deficit to only P63 billion this year, lower than the P66.8 billion recorded last year.

Morales said hitting the bureau's revenue collection targets this year was difficult because of the strong peso.

He said the BOC was losing P2.7 billion on payment and revenue collections a year for every cent of appreciation of the peso.

Morales said the government set its collection goal for BOC using a peso-dollar average exchange rate of 46-to-1. The peso, however, has been much stronger, even breaking into the 43-to-$1 territory this month.

The Development Budget and Coordination Committee (DBCC), the interagency body tasked to set government's fiscal and macroeconomic targets, earlier estimated that the peso appreciation could drag BOC's duty and import tax collection down to only P223 billion this year instead of the BOC's revised target of P228.2 billion.

The Department of Finance, another agency of the BIR and a member of the DBCC, said the BOC's target would stay at P228.1 billion despite the stronger than-expected peso.

Finance officials said that while the appreciation of the peso was pulling down the BOC collection, measures to improve efficiency in revenue collection and plug leakages due to smuggling and misdeclaration should offset the losses.

INSULAR LIFE

Investment Funds of Wealth Series

	Oct. 31, 2007	Oct. 31, 2007
Fixed Income Fund	1.041733	1.295636
Balanced Fund	1.126858	1.306019
Equity Fund	1.492882	1.848220
Dollar Fixed Income Fund	1.063101	1.200752

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	October 31, 2007	October 31, 2007
Asian Equity Fund	1.8722	1.9388
Managed Fund - Peso	1.4615	1.5010
Growth Fund - Peso	1.3803	1.4066
Bond Fund - Peso	1.2035	
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.1475	1.1475

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Forex reserves . . .

From page B1

The fourth quarter is historically a strong season for overseas Filipino workers' remittances.

"There will still be (outflows due to) debt requirements and the government will also buy dollars from the central bank for its debt servicing," the official said.

But the official said a projected level of $35 billion would still represent a significant build-up compared to the end-2006 GIR level of about $27 billion.

The GIR is a key indicator of a country's ability to cover the foreign exchange requirements of the economy, consisting of the BSP's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, foreign investments and special drawing rights from the International Monetary Fund.

In terms of reserve adequacy, the country's current GIR level can cover 5.1 months' worth of imports of goods and payments of services and income. It is also equivalent to 3.2 times the country's short-term external debt based on original maturity and 3.1 times based on residual maturity.

Short-term debt based on residual maturity refers to outstanding external debt with original maturity of a year or less plus principal payments on medium- and long-term loans falling due within the next 12 months.

The country's strong foreign reserves build-up since the start of the year has been supported by remittances from OFWs, foreign direct investments and portfolio investments. These inflows have allowed the BSP to become a heavy buyer of dollars in the Philippine Dealing System.

Building up to GIR is also one way of cushioning the peso's appreciation against the dollar in view of a broader trend in the greenback.

BSP says credit . . .

From page B1

Correspondingly, returns on equity and dollar-denominated bond exposures of most bond unit investment trust funds and mutual funds were affected by the negative investment outcry across different funds.

The peso also traded on the downside while interest rate spreads on Philippine bonds widened during the period.

But since then, the BSP noted that the market has recovered as investor sentiment improved following the US Federal Reserve's historic rate cut.

Lower interest rates in the world's biggest economy made high-yielding assets from emerging markets like the Philippines more attractive to investors.

The BSP also reported that Philippine banks had very minimal exposures in structured products such as collateralized debt obligations and credit-linked notes and none of them had underlying assets that were credit risky like subprime mortgages in the US.

To a large extent, the BSP said the limited impact of the renewed shock could be attributed to the country's sound economic fundamentals as reflected by its solid output growth, low inflation and strong external payments position.

"Our fiscal and financial sector reforms also contributed to strengthening the economy's ability to withstand shocks," the BSP said.

But notwithstanding the limited effect of the crisis, the BSP vowed that it would be ready to take preemptive measures to bolster confidence given the uncertainties in the financial market.

"The BSP also continues to monitor closely the situation so that threats to the stability of the financial system could be addressed promptly," the report said.

In its report, the BSP said the growth of the US subprime mortgage market was facilitated by several legal milestones instituted by the US government, such as state imposition of interest rate caps on housing loans, tax deductible interest on residential mortgages and legal provisions on automatic underwriting and securitization.

It noted that housing affordability reached a point where a significant portion of borrowers were overstretching their finances by purchasing risky products, many of which were backed by low-quality assets.

Thus, when the US Federal Reserve increased interest rates amid steady housing prices, many borrowers ended up defaulting on their loans and prepayment or refinancing options were not feasible due to inadequate housing equity.

At the same time, strong market performance may have yielded investment losses in 2005 to 2006 may have led to more liberal underwriting standards, the BSP noted.

"Lending safeguards were relaxed as intermediaries competed primarily from loan volumes rather than from ensuring loan quality," the BSP said. Doris C. Dumlao

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Fed cuts benchmark rate

Quarter percentage point reduction expected to ease strain of housing slump on US economy

WASHINGTON — THE FEDERAL RESERVE has shied away from an important investment — its second reduction in the last six weeks — to help the US economy survive the storms of a deepening housing slump that is likely to clamp growth in coming months.

Fed Chair Ben Bernanke and all but one of his colleagues on Wednesday approved to lower the federal funds rate by one-quarter percentage point to 4.50 percent at the end of a two-day meeting.

"The pace of economic expansion will likely slow in the near term, partly reflecting the intensification of the housing correction," the Fed acknowledged in a statement explaining its action.

The funds rate affects many other interest rates charged to millions of individuals and businesses. It is the Fed's most potent tool for influencing economic activity.

In response, commercial banks, including Bank of America, Wells Fargo and CitiCorp., announced that they were cutting their prime lending rates — for certain credit cards, home equity lines of credit and other loans — by a corresponding amount to 7.50 percent.

The rationale behind the cuts is that the lower borrowing costs will induce people and businesses to boost spending, energizing economic activity.

Wall Street cheered the Fed action. The Dow Jones Industrials jumped 237.34 points to close at 13,930.01.

The Fed policymakers supporting Wednesday's rate cut said the action — along with a rate reduction in September — was needed to "forestall some of the adverse effects on the broader economy" that might arise from the housing and credit troubles that have wreaked havoc on Wall Street over the past five months.

Fed policymakers indicated the two rate cuts achieved as far may be sufficient to help the economy make its way safely through the troubled spots.

They said the risks to the economy from inflation "roughly balance," or are equal to, the risks of a serious downturn in economic growth. Obviously, the risks of a recession were seen as more of a threat in the country's economic health.

The 9-1 decision to cut rates on Wednesday was opposed by Thomas Hoenig, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. He preferred no change in the funds rate.

So far, the economy has shown amazing resilience to the housing and credit strains.

The economy grew at a brisk 3.9 percent pace in the summer, the fastest in 1 1/2 years, the government reported Wednesday. The impressive performance came even as the housing market sank deeper into the doldrums.

Fed policymakers, in their statement, said the economy turned in a "solid" performance in the third quarter. They also said that "strains from financial markets have eased somewhat on balance."

Even as economic growth is expected to slow to a pace of around 1 percent or less in the current October-to-December period at the tail of the deteriorating housing slump, analysts say will's consumers and shift their spending.

In another balancing move, the Fed also shaved its lending rate to banks by one-quarter percentage point on Wednesday. That was the third cut to this rate since mid-August.

Complicating the Fed's job is keeping the economy and inflation on an even keel is surging oil prices. They soared to a record near $90 a barrel on Wednesday.

The Fed said "recent increases in energy and commodity prices, among other factors, have put renewed upward pressure on inflation."

The Fed said that, while some inflation barometers that exclude energy and food prices have improved modestly this year, inflation risks remain. They pledged to "monitor inflation developments carefully." AP

Rate cut seen to have limited impact on suffering banks

WASHINGTON — THE INTEREST RATE CUT that Wall Street believes will buffet the economy from housing market woes is unlikely to give much of a boost to suffering banks and homebuilders in the near term, analysts say.

The Federal Reserve policymaking committee is expected to approve cutting a key short-term rate at least a quarter percentage point Wednesday to help the economy get through a deeper than-expected housing slump and credit crunch that accelerated in August.

Investors are betting the US central bank will reduce the federal funds rate, the rate banks charge each other for overnight loans, to 4.5 percent. Over the next 12 to 18 months, lower rates on the Fed could help the overall economy because many equity credit lines and some credit card rates are pegged to short-term market rates.

But the Fed's efforts now, on top of a half-percentage-point rate cut in September, aren't change the outlook much, if at all, for companies on the front lines of mopping up the problems in the housing market or the complex securities backed by home loans.

"The problems in the housing market, the problems in the credit markets, are not easily solved by the Fed cutting rates," said Lance Hunt, chief economist for investment bank Friedman Billings, Ramsey & Co. in Arlington, Virginia, who sees the Fed trimming three quarter-point cuts by January and puts the odds of a recession in 2008 at 50 percent.

The thinking is that modest cuts improve borrower balance sheets if they have to pay less in money they borrow short-term while the one-they-change borrowers of long-term loans holds steady or moves higher. Yet more aggressive reductions in the credit markets extend beyond the benefits of small rate cuts.

Struggling homebuilders, such as D.R. Horton Inc., Lennar Corp. and Pulte Homes Inc., are faced with tightened lending standards and severely limited demand. Many would-be buyers are unable or qualify for loan approvals, even if rates move lower.

Lower interest rates are "certainly not the panacea" for getting the housing market back on track, said HSBC homebuilding analyst David Goldberg.

The median US home price nationwide fell for the eighth consecutive month in August, according to the S&P/Case-Shiller index released Tuesday. Prices in 20 metropolitan areas included in the index declined. Many experts predict housing prices will fall further before demand rebounds.

Jefferson Harralson, a banking analyst with Keefe, Bruyette & Woods Inc. who follows banks such as Bank of America Corp. and Wachovia Corp., said an October jobless increase from defaults "seems to be a given, whether or not a rate cut occurs."

He says home equity lines of credit will be less likely to default if rates are lower. But that is hardly a revenue cure for banks in an environment in which housing prices continue to fall and foreclosures continue to rise.

"The home equity business isn't going to be a growth business," "Mortgages are ... AP

Asian stocks, oil hit new peaks after Fed decision

HONG KONG — ASIAN STOCKS and oil prices hit record highs on Thursday as a Federal Reserve rate cut and strong growth data eased concerns about the impact of a housing slump on the US economy.

European stocks were poised to track Asia and a firm Wall Street.

The Fed's rate cut and the dollar's general slump, as well as a steep fall in US crude inventories, sent oil up nearly 2 percent to $96.24 a barrel for the first time, Gold rose in turn thrust spot gold to a 28-year peak near $800 an ounce.

Shares of Asian exporters were boosted by the US rate cut and data that showed the world's biggest economy and Asia's main export market grew at a surprisingly brisk 3.9 percent annual rate in the third quarter despite the housing downturn and financial market jitters seen during the period.

Still, some analysts worried that markets could swing lower once the Federal Reserve also signaled on Wednesday that more rate reductions were unlikely if the economy held up.

"Though the Fed's rate cut is a mix positive to market sentiment, there is always the sense of caution over the issue of rally," said Lee Woo-hyun, a market analyst at Kyobo Securities in Seoul. "With more good news out of the bag, I see a good chance of a correction."

Tokyo's Nikkei average rose 0.8 percent to a new seven-month high, while MSCI's measure of other Asia Pacific stocks advanced nearly 0.8 percent by 0605 GMT.

The MSCI index hit a record high, bringing total gains this year to nearly 38 percent.

The Asia stocks rally pushed MSCI's world equity index to a record high, taking this year's rise to 11.6 percent.

The oil and gold rally pushed commodity stocks higher.

Australian gold producer Newcrest Mining rose 3.4 percent, and Japanese energy firm Nippon Oil added 4.2 percent.

Japan's top refinery Tonengeneral, which shares Chinese state-owned PetroChina, rallied 9 percent after Beijing unexpectedly lifted domestic gasoline and diesel prices by a tenth on Thursday the first increase in 17 months.

Japanese exporters were also in favor, driven by a weaker yen, and hopes the US rate cut will help spur US consumers, who generate about two-thirds of US economic activity.

Investors said Taiwan's TSEC after the world's No. 2 contract chip maker brought a weak fourth quarter, sending the stock down 4 percent.

UMC's drop weighed on Taiwan's TAIEX, which closed 1.2 percent lower.

South Korea's KOSPI set a new life high before settling a touch lower, but Australia's S&P/ASX 200 index posted a record closing high.

The dollar was steadier after sliding to a record low against the euro overnight, but was seen likely to remain weak on less upcoming US data offered support.

After climbing to a life high just above $1.03, the euro traded at $1.0407 in afternoon Asian trade.

The dollar was steady above 115 yen as the Japanese unit struggled in the face of stronger equity markets. Reuters

Currencies

October 31, 2007 Country	Unit	Cash Equivalent	Bank Equivalent	Drug Equivalent
United States	Dollar	1.00000	1.00000	1.00000
Canada	Dollar	1.00040	1.00000	1.0018
United Kingdom	Pound	1.48170	1.48000	1.4850
Hong Kong	Dollar	1.28000	1.27900	1.2800
Switzerland	Franc	0.84	0.84	0.84
Israel	Shekel	0.25	0.25	0.25
Singapore	Dollar	0.67	0.67	0.67
Australia	Dollar	0.87	0.87	0.87
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.28	0.28	0.28
South Korea	Won	0.0010	0.0010	0.0010
World	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
Thailand	Baht	0.0300	0.0300	0.0300
UK	Pound	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Japan	Yen	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Korea	Won	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
China	Yuan	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Denmark	Krone	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
India	Rupee	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
New Zealand	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Taiwan	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

Source: Reuters | Cash Equivalent of US$ 100 | Bank Equivalent of US$ 1 | Drug Equivalent of US$ 1 | Bank exchange rates as of Oct. 31, 2007

BUSINESS

IT spending in healthcare industry seen to increase

By Raoul W. Dorrington

THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR IS SEEN TO account for an increasing percentage of the overall information technology spending in the country in the next three years.

For 2007, IT spending in the country is seen to reach $1.3 billion.

According to the latest study of Singapore-based Springboard Research, emerging markets in Asia—including the Philippines—would account for an increasing percentage of IT spending in the healthcare industry across the region.

Based on Springboard estimates, these emerging markets represent 58 percent of the US$3.4-billion healthcare IT spending in Asia outside Japan in 2007.

The research firm said this was expected to increase to 64 of total spending by 2010.

"While it is no surprise to IT vendors that the emerging markets in Asia are growing quickly, the percentage of the total healthcare IT spending could provide a surprise to many vendors," said Jonathan Gillet, research manager for Springboard Research.

Gillet said that with the way the market was fragmented, vendors could not have a regional strategy and would need to be focused on specific countries or industries.

Also, he said healthcare IT spending in the emerging markets of Asia was still very much a bottom-based play as these economies build their basic IT infrastructure.

A separate study made by New York-based Access Market International Partners found that small and medium businesses in the six top Southeast Asian markets—including the Philippines—would spend at least $1.0 billion on IT in 2008.

SMBs in the Philippines—defined as firms with up to 999 workers—are expected to spend $1.2 billion on boosting their IT infrastructure this year, up 19 percent over 2006.

AMI-Partners said much of this spending will be driven by computing—which includes PCs, printers, peripherals and servers—as well as Internet-related investments.

Frank Gazin, AMI-Partners research analyst, said most SMBs in the Philippines were buying investments on computer hardware and Internet-related technologies as they build the basic blocks of IT infrastructure.

She said the two key reasons for the increase in IT spending was awareness and realization that IT would help boost businesses, and that IT would improve delivery of products and services.

"In addition, strong competition among IT market players offers wider technology opportunities for SMBs," Gazin said. "At the moment, the Philippines is one of the top five countries in the Asia Pacific region outside of Japan with the fastest IT growth rates."

The study further showed that the bulk of the IT spending was coming from SMBs around the National Capital Region, accounting for more than half the total IT spend this year.

NEW CRANES ROLLOUT AT SOUTH HARBOR
Port operator Asian Terminals Inc. (ATI) recently took delivery of three Ritsui Rubber Tired Gantry (RTG) cranes worth P180 million, to further raise efficiency at the Manila South Harbor and to prepare it for the rising demand of the growing economy.

New investment agency proposed

By Michelle P. Remo

A BILL THAT SEEKS TO CREATE THE Industrial Development Board (IDB), an agency that will be mandated to improve the country's investment climate, was filed recently with the Lower House.

House Bill No. 2830, authored by Quirino Rep. Junie Evangelista Cua, provided that the IDB would assume the regulatory functions of the Board of Investments which, in turn, would focus on promoting the Philippines as an investment site.

The author believes that having a government body focused on regulations and another on promotion will help improve the country's investment climate.

Regulatory body

The proposed body, which will be an attached agency of the Department of Trade and Industry, would be composed of seven governors, namely: The trade secretary, trade undersecretaries for industry and investments group and international trade, three private-sector representatives and the IDB director general.

The IDB will also be responsible for the formulation of the so-called "national framework for industrial development (NFID)." It will promulgate rules, regulations and policies on the granting of fiscal incentives to IDB-registered enterprises, and determine the government's investments priorities plan (IPP), the list of government-preferred businesses/activities and projects that are entitled to fiscal incentives.

The bill states that the IPP's validity will be consistent with the duration of the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) and Medium Term Philippine Investments Plan (MTPIP), both prepared by the National Economic and Development Authority. This amends the current practice of changing the IPP every year.

SME assistance

The other functions of the IDB, as stated under the bill, are as follows: Assist micro and small enterprises in the preparation of feasibility and other pre-investment project study; process and approve, deny, suspend, or revoke applications for registration; establish a mediation center for disputes between registered enterprises; and restrict importation or importation of any component, raw materials, intermediate or finished goods as it deems necessary to maximize resources and supply in the country.

Some incentives provided in the village similar to those enjoyed by BOI-registered firms. It is, however, giving better incentives package for export-oriented firms which includes an eight-year income tax holiday and exemption from value-added tax on goods purchased locally.

Generous perks

The bill also provides that a registered activity or projects may qualify for a performance incentives in lieu of income after its income tax holiday privilege has lapsed.

The bill also seeks to exempt microenterprises from local taxes.

"All things constant, incentives become material and determinative of investment decisions," Cua said in the bill's explanatory note.

Cua raised the country's need to boost investments, citing the 2006 World Investment Report which indicated that the Philippines attracted only $2.56 billion in foreign direct investments last year. The amount paled in comparison with investments that entered Singapore ($24,601 million), Thailand ($9.6 billion), Malaysia ($6.06 billion) and Indonesia ($5.936 million).

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BUSINESS Friday

Business Features Editor Margie Quiroz Espino

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Skills, little cash loan enough to grow a business

HILARIOS Reyes with Quezon City councilor Bernadette Dy

A recipient of microfinancing relates how a P5,000 loan has helped her succeed

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

HOUSEWIFE MILAGROS REYES counts herself as one of the estimated 40 million Filipinos classified as "poor."

But Reyes, who did not even get to finish high school, decided to do something about her plight, which was why she grabbed the opportunity in 2004 to borrow P5,000 from the microfinancing program of the Jaguing Honorarium foundation.

Reyes, who had to help her husband put food on the table for their family of six, used the money to expand her small business selling packed lunches near a school in Mandaluyong, Quezon City.

When she paid off the loan after six months, she borrowed another P5,000 to further grow her business and venture into selling other food products like pure hamburger, a delicacy popular during the Christmas season.

When she paid off that loan, she got another to buy a pig, which she sent home to the province for her siblings to take care of until eventually eaten here.

Recently, she got her fourth loan worth P7,000 and she diversified into selling Christmas decorations to celebrate.

No longer difficult

She is happy to say that after more than three years of running her own businesses, it is no longer so difficult for her and her family to eat three square meals a day and have enough left over to put in the bank.

Her husband and her children help in the business and they all get paid a salary.

"I'm happy because I am now able to give gifts worth P500 to my children during Christmas, unlike before when I can only manage to give them P100 each," Reyes told the Inquirer in Filipino.

"I also now have P10,000 in the bank and my dream is to run for a while and enjoy my success," she added in Filipino.

Same experience

Quezon City Councilor Bernadette Herrera-Dy said she wants more of her peer constituents to experience the same success through microfinance.

She said the project was close to her heart because her father also got his first break in business through microfinance.

"My father was once a newspaper boy who got his capital from a small loan en-

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People, Events & Products

Editor Aries Espinosa

Scholastic International president visits schools

HUGH ROBARE, PRESIDENT OF global children's book publisher Scholastic International, visited Scholastic Uno High School, Philippine Cultural High School, and Chinese International School Aug. 7. The three schools have recently forged partnerships with Scholastic Philippines to implement the Preschool Literacy Program (PLP) and the Assessment and Enrichment Program (AEP) among their students. Boone met the schools' owners and academic leaders, visited the preschool departments, and interviewed the Reading Center at Uno High School.

"It's exciting to work around the world to the endeavor of helping children learn to read, and helping parents and teachers teach these children," says Boone. "This is an issue that all around the world, there are thoughtful people who have dedicated their lives to advancement."

"In the schools, I think the most exciting thing is simply the children," he added. "I saw today classrooms that were so well-managed, and I can see that the children are interested in learning, are very responsive, and the teachers have the skills to carefully tease children to learn individually."

Boone believes that Scholastic International can play a big role in improving the reading skills of children in developing countries such as the Philippines. He notes that for 90 years since its inception, Scholastic has been dedicated to helping children read. "We're able as a global company to take the best ideas, the best practices in teaching and learning from everywhere on the planet, and bring them or leverage against the opportunity of having a better method for learning. And I think that we are going to learn as much from the Philippines as we are able to bring ideas in the Philippines about learning from other parts of the world," Boone observes that while Filipino teachers work primarily with traditional methods, they are nonetheless very receptive to new ideas. "When I say to the schools are knowledgeable, dedicated people who are working to an environment where they are using traditional tools, but they're very open minded about the new tools that we can bring from other parts of the world. I believe that is a place like the Philippines, there will be more answers in many of teaching methods, which will combine the old methods with the new technologies."

However, Boone is careful to note that computer-assisted learning is not a universal remedy for all the challenges of education. "I don't think that digital learning is a panacea. It just answers all of the problems in the classroom. We all believe that it is strong teacher training and motivation, matched with technology, and very importantly, matched with parental involvement and the whole education process, that will give us the best method."

Scholastic Philippines has recently pioneered school reading programs such as the PLP and the AEP to partnership with Uno High School, Philippine Cultural High School, and the Chinese International School. Both programs are anchored on the principle of encouraging children to read by modeling them to books that are appropriate and enjoyable for them, while also developing their critical reading skills. "What we see in these classrooms is a great combination of helping the children develop the critical skills for literacy, but on the same time, preserving their enjoyment and creativity related to an ability to read."

According to Boone, the Philippines is one of Scholastic's more important future markets. "This country could be one of the world's most important centers for knowledge students, as opposed to laborers. The path for that to happen for the Philippines is really through education," Boone says. "And we see signs in so many places, in private schools and government schools, of a real energy to accomplish that goal."

"Our hope is that we can help in the most basic ways the Filipino people realize the destiny of professional life and economic security, and the joys of health and welfare by focusing on developing literacy and school advancement. With this in mind, we are trying to help provide the materials to teachers and to children and create school classrooms that will support that mission."

ICS-PS 38TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

The International College of Singapore-Philippine Section (ICS-PS) is holding its 38th annual convention from Nov. 26 to Dec. 1 at the Hyatt Centre and Hotel, Pedro Gil corner Mi-Cal Pilar, Manila. While the theme "Keep the Torch Burning: Success Towards Significance", the 3-day convention program includes workshops and updates in the tertiary curriculum, special events for guests to grace the convention are former President Fidel V. Ramos and Mayor Alfredo Lim. Presidents of different proprietary medical and surgical societies will honor the event.

There will also be live bridge and numerous management speakers to give lectures and interactive sessions. for more inquiries, call the ICS-PS at 826-1395. Shown are the ICS-PS executive council (2006-2007: Standing, from left: Dra. Rosario Lagascon II, treasurer; Romeo Acosta (governor); Gerardo Chito Alvarez (governor); Jesus Rivera (secretary); and Bernard Benedicto (regent). Seated: Drs. Placido Calimag Jr (vice president); Rosario Salang Jr (president); and Edwin Argonza (president-elect). Dr. Antonio Gallegos is also governor of the 2006-2007 executive council.

SSM: Educating about the 'global village'

IN AN INCREASINGLY GLOBALized world, schools have to change how their learners are educated. Young learners will have to be equipped with critical values to better understand the world to become multicultural the realities, people and cultures they will interact with. These choices in life tomorrow will be far different than those their parents made yesterday. Their success or failure as responsible citizens will also be based on the choices they make.

Singapore School Manila (SSM) has a reputation for understanding the global village we live in. The SSM curriculum is "alive", which means it is continuously enriched and based on the latest research and best practices in education that the university staffs are imbibed in the pedagogies that we run in the school.

SSM educators are experienced and passionate. They aim to bring out the best in their learners by giving enjoyable and fun activities appropriate for their intelligence.

Every child is empowered children to raise in a world where values lie in information dissemination and communications. They create a conducive environment to encourage pupils to think out of the box, be more environmental - innovative and for them to make a success of their careers considering the different talents and aspirations of their pupils.

Following the curriculum and educational trends of schools in Singapore, SSM students are made to prepare for the internationally recognized educational qualifications, the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE). This qualification is accredited by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate and is a prerequisite for entry to tertiary institutions in America, Europe and Australia.

SSM believes that for a school to be successful, emphasis has to be placed on personal character and then academic excellence. The two main long-term goals in SSM are, therefore, character formation and bringing the best out in each and every pupil in an international environment. In SSM, they have high expectations of their students.

The SSM curriculum emphasizes the following essential qualities that all SSM students work towards: Understanding and appreciation of their "higher thinking" in all subjects, respect for the home country and the family unit; willingness to serve the interest of the larger community, high regard and desire for a holistic education; understanding and embracing information technology (IT); personal integrity and identity; appreciation of a multicultural and multi-religious world; and, appreciation of the environment within which they live.

Now on its second year, SSM has students who come from more than 11 countries, providing truly an international environment for learning and sharing.

SSM seeks partnerships with every member of the school community as it ensure that its learners become global citizens.

Singapore School Manila is located at Blocks 26 Magallanes, Molave Street, Ayala Alabang Village, call 851-1221 or 851-8822, or log on to www.singaporeschoolmanila.com.

MAX'S PARTIES RAFFLE WINNER

Mercedes Jane Dee from left of Nova Ecija, along with Ian Justin, receives a P125,000 by Kingdom shopping spree gift certificate as monthly winner of the Max's Parties and Functions Toyota Avanza Year promo. Also shown are Atty. Melvin Sangco of Kingdom and Marc Ian Juan, assistant marketing manager of Max's.

Phil Food Expo 7 to highlight regional food

THE PHILIPPINE EXPORTERS OF a variety of food products become the abundance of its natural resources. There are thousands of quality-tasting and delectable food products that are only enjoyed locally, but deserve their places in the international table. Because these and more as the Philippine Food Processors and Exporters Organization (Philfoodexpo) Inc. the country's biggest umbrella organization of food processors and exporters, holds the 7th Philippine Food Expo at the SM Megamall Hyte, Old Mega mall Building, 21 to Feb. 3, 2008. This year's edition will highlight regional food products and services through the "Find Regional food fair." The event is supported by the Department of Agriculture (DT), SM Megamall, Philexport, Philcoa, and Bro Boy Pinoy Mastercard. Philippine Food Processors and Exporters Organizations

Marketing Leadership

MARKETING IS A WAY OF LIFE, A PHILOSOPHY of doing business or it must pervade an entire organization. Marketing embraces the value proposition of a company or brand, product or service to convince prospective consumers to prefer one's brand against the competition, influence their attitude and drive behavior. Thus, marketing is what any entity must do.

Leadership, on the other hand, is what any entity must have so that the concepts of Marketing Leadership evolve of an entity that is consistently marketing-driven, consumer-focused and customer-oriented. That is borne out of a deep respect for the principle that the customer is king. The customer is the boss, not your superior, because ultimately, the customer has the power to fire even the chair of the board.

If an entire organization exercises Marketing Leadership, there is a boost to productivity. Leadership, Marketing, disseminated by sound strategy and excellent execution, unites branch built on strong brand positioning statements, superior or innovative services or product and package offerings, pricing that promotes attractive value for money. Unit economics through integrated marketing communication consisting of world-class advertising campaigns that are brought to life before the live via experiential marketing events, and availability that provides the right product or service at the right time and in the right quantity.

Ultimately, a company characterized by Marketing Leadership produces Leadership Marketing in the market place which then leads to the ultimate reward of Market Leadership for a brand.

Here are 12 Principles of Marketing Leadership:

1. Do your homework—Study. Read. Watch. Learn. Listen. In the 4 Cs—consumers, competitors, customers, companies—Sales, R&D, suppliers, friends and even foes. Be market-oriented, consumer-driven and fact-based. Know global best practices. Study the history of your industry, company and brand—those who do not appreciate the past are doomed to repeat it. Do your DROT.

2. Invest in research—If you think the price of education is expensive (i.e., research), imagine the cost of ignorance. But while research is vital, it can only facilitate, not replace, decision-making. I believe in research but not in researching everything because per (for), judgment and wisdom (supersede) them. Apply research to segment markets and focus on the most appropriate segment to attract.

3. Take it to the next level—In all aspects of the marketing mix. Get better every year and every day. Live the Olympic motto: "Faster, Higher, Stronger. World-class marketing is "Excellent quality at cyber-speed and at least cost." As dear Carnegie said, "Learn to say 'Yes' to the good, so you can say 'Yes' to the best."

4. Reinforce brand equity—The excellent marketing programs and communication campaign that build on strong brand positioning statements which are important, specific and unique for consumers and anchored on in-depth insight that a response to the competition.

Classic examples: that have ensured boundaries and evoked time are Mallomars's "Come to where the flavor is. Come to Marlboro Country", Singapore Airlines' "Singapore Girl—A great way to fly" Hilot's "Your do it," "Hotel Inside," Manny and's "Priceless," this Mondelez Stella Bottle, Avia' "We Fly Harder," Visa's "All it takes" and Nokia's "We do more" are great regional campaigns.

Locally, we have Sabanaw's "Mas-lasa mo versus," Alaska Milk's "Winning Moms in Asia," Jollibee's "Langhap sarap," San Miguel Beer's "Ba Ang May Pinagsamahan" and Intel's "Wala a Lamang."

5. Reinvent your brand—Constantly, but without losing your brand's essence or DNA. Starting examples would be Apple's "Think Different" mantra (Mac iPod, iPhone), Nike's "Just do it" and Adidas' "Impossible is Nothing," McDonald's "I'm loving it," allowing healthier choices, and Levi's latest Copper Collection. The key is delivering the same message but in a refreshingly new and relevant manner.

6. Increase activities—Focus on (among productivity) of your budget. Demand world-class, effective advertising from your creative agency. Require cost effective strategies, plans and buying. Never settle for mediocrity. Enhance credibility in advertising via advertising that sells or "work that works." Text PR into a competitive advantage because it is more credible or commercial advertising.

Bear in mind some brands do not even have any advertising (Facebook, Google, Viagra and the Body Shop). Forge strategic partnerships with non-phenomenon products/brands to maximize synergies, cross-sell and share costs.

7. Think creatively—To offer innovative solutions to a variety of marketing issues and business problems. For instance, when Depot lost the US cola wars to Coke, they turned their attention to noncarbonated beverages, buying Gatorade and Tropicana, and tying up with Unilever for Lipton tea and with Starbucks for Frappe. As a result, they were able to convert their failure in colas to success in Non-Cardio, Fatto, Lay's snacks snacks and Sariland (KFC, Pizza Hut, Taco Bell).

8. Prioritize your options—Apply the basic principles of economics, i.e., optimum allocation of scarce resources. Pick your battles. Be decisive. Which geography do we compete in? Which industry category brand? Which do I perceive among the 4Ps, AIO, vs 5Ps, Production vs Media, Consumer vs Trade promotions?

9. Take calculated risks—Learn from mistakes as much as from successes. Even John Grisham got is happy with 1 home run out of 5 "swings" at bat. Fifties to double, test with consumers. Learn from mistakes committed by others, e.g., physicians conduct post-mortems or mortality conferences if a patient dies in their care so other physicians may learn from the experience for future reference.

10. Expand your horizons—Think beyond your industry or hours and "practice" your principles because you are talking in the same room. For instance, if you are engaged in the FMCG industry, study marketing and communications campaigns of fashion, retail, real estate, banking, pre-need plans, media, telecommunications (service or unit), automobile and transportation, or agribusiness.

Go beyond your borders. Travel to advanced markets and spend time observing environments. I guarantee you will learn immensely for local adaptation.

11. Leadership—Hiring and the best in your people to enable them to bring out the best in your brands, the ex-ad league at P&G once advised, "The hapless manager is one who has under-lium managers more able than himself."

12. Integrate and synthesize all components of the business and constituencies of your organization—If you wish to master marketing, be a salesman, a promotion girl, a merchandiser. Go on sales training to gain experience and respect from your sales force and trade customers. Understand the principles of manufacturing and engineering, purchasing, warehousing and logistics. Work with your Finance and Accounting by knowing your P&L, balance sheet and cash flow statement.

These are the 12 principles of Marketing Leadership that will produce Leadership Marketing and ultimately rulership in Market Leadership for your product or service.

1. Do your homework.

7. Think creatively.

Take it to the next level.

2. Invest in research.

Martin Roll on Costa Coffee: Can an alliance take on a global brand in China?

THIS WEEK, IN GIVE THE STAGE TO Martin Roll, author of *Asian Brand Strategy*, published by John Wiley & Sons. MarketingFriday interviewed the brand guru at the recently concluded Global Brand Forum held in Singapore. Joining us were a Filipino coffee entrepreneur who is in the verge of global success and renowned Filipino brand consultant Tony Tan Caktiong. Our will introduce them when we come out with the interview in the column] who got free branding advice from Roll.

While we're in the process of researching and editing the interview, here's an appetizer which we hope will serve as an introduction to the upcoming interview/forum with the Filipino coffee entrepreneur.

For more branding articles, visit Martin Roll's blog—there's lots of good stuff there for branding executives and you can even get a free chapter from his book. Go to: www.asianbrand-strategy.com if you want more.

Here's Roll ...

China , with its huge customer base and an ever growing economy, is attracting companies from across the globe to set up shop.

Many of these Western brands have entered China and many others are making a beginning. One thing that has emerged as a common factor from the experiences of all these companies is that China is a tough place for Western companies to do business in.

Many factors make the going tough in China but the most important one is the difficulty in understanding the local culture and preferences of local consumers. Being a quintessentially collectivistic society, China is completely different from the Western world and this creates some obvious challenges.

In overcome these challenges, many companies opt for either joint ventures or strategic alliance route to establishing their business in China. Costa Coffee, the British coffee brand is the latest addition to the list of such companies.

Costa Coffee is part of the British leisure group Whitbread. With around 500 coffee stores in the UK and another 150 scattered Europe and

Battle of the brands is on in China

the Middle East, Costa Coffee has been a brand to reckon with in these regions.

But compared to the global market leader Starbucks that entered China in 1998 and already has around 180 outlets in China, Costa Coffee entered the Chinese market in December 2006.

Unlike Starbucks, Costa Coffee ventured into a joint venture with the Yuetai Group based in Jiangsu province. The logic for such a partnership is quite simple...the Costa Coffee brand being a new entrant to the Chinese market would take a long time if it went alone but a partnership with a local company would allow Costa Coffee to leverage the partner's resources for instance, if you are engaged in the FMCG industry study marketing and communications campaigns of fashion, retail, real estate, banking, pre-need plans, media, telecommunications (service or unit), automobile and transportation, or agribusiness.

Go beyond your borders. Travel to advanced markets and spend time observing environments. I guarantee you will learn immensely for local adaptation.

11. Leadership—Hiring and the best in your people to enable them to bring out the best in your brands, the ex-ad league at P&G once advised, "The hapless manager is one who has under-lium managers more able than himself."

12. Integrate and synthesize all components of the business and constituencies of your organization—If you wish to master marketing, be a salesman, a promotion girl, a merchandiser. Go on sales training to gain experience and respect from your sales force and trade customers. Understand the principles of manufacturing and engineering, purchasing, warehousing and logistics. Work with your Finance and Accounting by knowing your P&L, balance sheet and cash flow statement.

These are the 12 principles of Marketing Leadership that will produce Leadership Marketing and ultimately rulership in Market Leadership for your product or service.

Take it to the next level.

2. Invest in research.

Martin Roll on Costa Coffee: Can an alliance take on a global brand in China?

THIS WEEK, IN GIVE THE STAGE TO Martin Roll, author of *Asian Brand Strategy*, published by John Wiley & Sons. MarketingFriday interviewed the brand guru at the recently concluded Global Brand Forum held in Singapore. Joining us were a Filipino coffee entrepreneur who is in the verge of global success and renowned Filipino brand consultant Tony Tan Caktiong. Our will introduce them when we come out with the interview in the column] who got free branding advice from Roll.

While we're in the process of researching and editing the interview, here's an appetizer which we hope will serve as an introduction to the upcoming interview/forum with the Filipino coffee entrepreneur.

For more branding articles, visit Martin Roll's blog—there's lots of good stuff there for branding executives and you can even get a free chapter from his book. Go to: www.asianbrand-strategy.com if you want more.

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As attractive as it may sound, such partnerships do come with a price.

Costa's forays in China will depend heavily on its partners. Conversely, is to the Yuetai group that will drive Costa's business. With its Italian image in Europe, Costa aspires to capture the very Italian aura in the Chinese market as well.

But such a strategy raises a very crucial question about brand expectancy. Can a Chinese partner that consumers pay a premium to consume coffee as a café is for the experience.

Chinese customers, especially in affluent cities such as Shanghai would aspire to identify with a global brand portraying a global image. Starbucks has been fairly successful in replicating such a customer need.

Costa Coffee, with its Chinese partner, could face the risk of customizing the brand a bit too much. Such a step would jeopardize Costa's market appeal.

Even though the joint venture could allow Costa Coffee to understand the market better, it would have to tread its path carefully.

It would be interesting to watch Costa's future path, given that Starbucks plans to expand in China very aggressively in the coming years and open thousands of new stores yearly.

Who wins in the war between a global brand and a joint venture between a European brand and a Chinese company is ultimately for the Chinese customers to decide.

But as long as Costa Coffee ensures that its brand essence and experience is not compromised, Starbucks can expect some competition.

(Martin Roll (www.martinroll.com) is the CEO of Interrobespublic, a leading strategic advisory firm on branding excellence, and the author of Asian Brand Strategy. He was a featured speaker at the Global Brand Forum held in Singapore. Visit www.globalbrandforum.org for more information on next year's forum. Keep your questions coming. Send them to us at MarketingFriday@INQ.net.)

BUSINESS Friday

Humony what?

It's a new Korean invention that promises to help users shed off excess fat without necessarily going on a diet or exercise

By Kenneth M. del Rosario

HUMONY with floating oil pad

WHO KNEW INVESTING in a slimming machine could not only help in winning the battle of the bulge but also keep your bank account happy and fat?

Judy Chun, a Korean national, only wanted to shed off the excess weight she gained during her pregnancy. Last year, when she gave birth to a healthy baby boy, Matthew, her waistline ballooned to 27 from 23 inches. Her weight shot up from 50 to 65 kilos.

It was not until she came across Humony, a slimming and modified machine from Korea, that Chun regained her figure to its original slim and healthy form.

She identified with Dr. Rosenicole, if not millions, of Filipinos who wish to become slim like her and stay that way. The entrepreneur in Chun saw the opportunity of

JUDY CHUN

HUMONY machine

capturing the potential market and realized that the health and beauty industry is worth dabbling in.

Wasting no time, Chun quickly put up Hygee Bodycare, a beauty and health center in San Juan, Metro Manila, which features the slimming machine to capitalize on the business opportunity.

Beauty conscious

"I realized I was not the only one in the country who wanted to look and feel beautiful," Chun told the business. "That's why I decided to bring Humony here to share this wonderful invention with others."

Two weeks ago, Chun started operations with her newly opened 200-square meter center which houses 11 Humony machines imported from Seoul. Chun said she plans to add at least nine more to maximize the space of the well-lit, clean, and homey clinic.

Humony is a slimming machine invented by Mgreo Medical in Korea which, according to Chun, distributes the equipment in more than 20 countries worldwide including the United States, Australia, Spain, Thailand, and Mexico, among others. In the Philippines, Chun owns the exclusive rights to distribute and sell Humony.

It is in the clinic where people can use the slimming machine for a nominal fee of P200 per session which lasts for 40 minutes a day.

> 'Humony will create its own niche market because it is a non-invasive machine which delivers desired results'

Chun said results can be seen and felt after only 10 sessions without either dieting or exercising. For faster results, however, people can opt to do it every hour session they can daily.

Chun said she believes Humony will create its own niche market in the health and beauty industry because it is "a non-invasive machine which delivers desired results with convenient use," the businesswoman pointed out. "It is getting the results of exercise without actually exercising."

Big challenge

Introducing a new product or service is a big challenge, stressed Chun, who has been living in the Philippines since 1996, especially to people like her who does not have prior business experience.

With the increased health and beauty industry—what with slimming machines and drink formulas popping up every day all promising to trim down the inches—it can be challenging to even lure people to go to the center and try the machine.

Patience, however, does pay off. With the help of seven beauty and health attendants she hired, Chun personally visits nearby houses and establishments to explain to people how the machine works and how it is different from other fads slimming equipment in the market.

Her team also distributes coupons which entitles visitors to P1,000 worth of free facial use of Humony. That's at least 10 sessions with the Humony at absolutely no cost.

"This is because I want every one to get to try the machine and see how it works for themselves, if you have money, good. You become my good client. If not, you can always tap others to avail of the service. I don't want anyone to miss the machine," Chun said. "There's just no excuse for anyone not to try it."

The good part is, according to Chun, who got a degree in dentistry from the University of the East in 2002, virtually anyone can use it. Only children below four years old and diabetics are pregnant are discouraged to use the machine.

As part of their Christmas promo, people who avail of one session of Humony also gets to try the Top and Top body bed massage and the Moxi foot bath, an equipment that stimulates blood circulation and relieves body pain and cramps, among others, the businesswoman said.

Paying customers

Since the center opened on Oct. 19, customers have begun walking in the center to inquire about the products. "The first few days, it was just the curious bodies who were coming in. Then the news, paying customers eventually came," Chun said, adding that the center now gets no less than 20 customers a day. Chun said she would decide to get together party on Nov. 13 to formally open the center.

"People from all walks of life come in here [the center]," she said. "Employees in the nearby establishments come during their lunch breaks. They said a session with the Humony is a much better activity than sleeping at their desk," Chun said.

She said that although her center is open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., she would be more than happy to extend the hours should there be requests from customers. And because it's the customers' convenience that comes first for Chun, the center is open from Mondays to Sundays as well.

"At first the customers were a bit reluctant to try Humony because they are not familiar with it. But after they have tried the machine, it is they who do not want to stop," Chun said with a laugh. She added that there are equal numbers of male and female patients coming in to try the product.

Business opportunity for people who do not have time to go to the beauty and health center every day, for sure. The slimming machine is available for purchase to the tune of P342,000 (a discounted P338,000 until the end of the year). "This is an investment for our health we can't afford to miss," Chun said.

Investing in the Humony is also a much better business than many selling systems and cell phone reloading centers, she said, because there is lesser risk of failure. "And whenever there are no customers, you can always hop on it and get fit yourself," Chun said in jest.

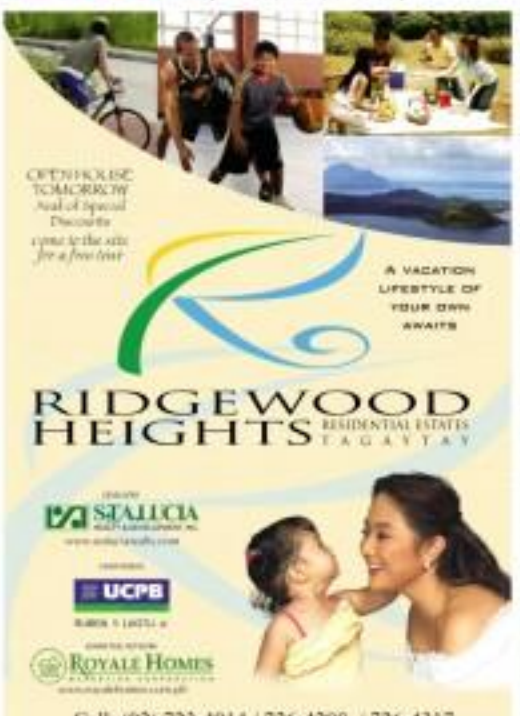
She added that owners of sauna gyms, salons, and spas around the San Juan area had ordered several machines already. "They plan to add it as a new feature in their businesses," Chun revealed.

Chun and her husband spent a million pesos to renovate the center and another million or so for the purchase of the Humony machines and other investments. Even though the center does not have its start as big, she said.

"The Humony machine is a good business opportunity for new entrepreneurs, too," she pointed out. "You can buy just one machine, and start operating from your home. Simultaneously, you have a market with your family, friends, and neighbors around."

Chun said she is confident that the 9 million people would embrace and patronize the product. "Pinays are beauty-conscious people. They love looking and feeling beautiful."

"And that is good," she continued. "It's about time we pay more attention to our physical, not, financial health."



Skills, little cash ...

Rowena Oy said that since the program started in July 2004, in cooperation with Task Force Kilusp Bayap program of the city government, almost all of the 1,000 residents of Quezon City Sentinelgas who have gone through the program have been able to earn their payments.

Moved on

Some have even stopped borrowing from the microfinance institution because they have moved on to getting bigger resources from the rural or thrift banks.

She said most of the entrepreneurs ventures into home-based businesses, such as convenience and eatery. Some are selling peanut butter, cooked food, school supplies and processed meat products.

"We are continuing with the project and we are more revamped it recently for the first because it is doing well," Rowena Oy said.

She said she was encouraging many of her constituents from the lower income class to pick up new skills they can earn from, such as high-speed sewing, cellular phone repair, welding, hairdressing, and cobbling.

"What we are telling them is that they do not need that much capital to go into business. They just need skills and a little help and they are on their way," she said.

LIFESTYLE

Editor Cheche Banal-Formoso

[ETTING] in from Switzerland for the iconic Omega VP and head of product development Jean-Claude Monachon, with Swiss Ambassador Peter Sutter and Oliver Hugenschmidt. Omega regional sales director

WEDNESDAY 2BU ● THURSDAY FOOD ● FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

OMEGA'S beautiful couple Lucy Torres and Richard Gomez

New boutique for timeless timepieces

IT WAS A MIX OF POMP and glitz, paparazzi, the rat rat rubbing about the launching of the new Omega boutique at the third level of Trilogy in Quezon City.

The shop is known as the Omega De Ville Store Globe.

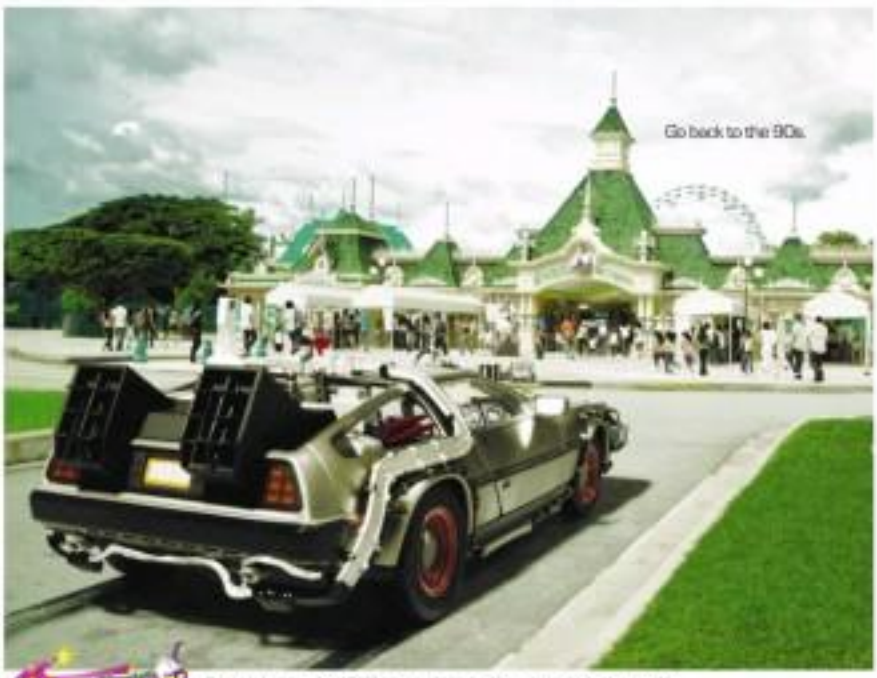
Switzerland then sent reps of watch firms everywhere, and not normal loads of them were proudly wearing their Omega watches.

Hostess of the hour was del mundo Omega Switzerland vice president and head for product development Jean-Claude Monachon and regional sales manager Oliver Hugenschmidt, who both posed

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using Kodak EasyShare

In case he was happening:

The Omega top men both scribed with Swiss Ambassador Peter Sutter, Philippine fashion outlet in Switzerland Manuel A.Z. Barbankas, Sen. Chiz Es-



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10 am - 7 pm
10 am - 10 pm

SEN. CHIZ Escudero (second from left) with Omega general manager Edith Dychiao, and Luxuria managing directors Ivan Yao and Emerson Tan

OMEGA young generation: Susan Lim, Mylene Abbo-Sayno, Mike Osueña and Mia Bondoc

OMEGA women: Juji Bonoan, Betty Tee, marketing officer Beth Marcilla and Ling Ling Tan

New boutique for timeless timepieces

SEN. Escudero and Bacardi's woman of the hour, Bibo Martinez

NIKA Morales, David Miles, Hannah Cruz and Jackilou Feng

GANG OF 3: DJ Punch, DJ Chamy and DJ Karl Ty

MTV's Wenchil Garcia and Ganamel Lunar

RONALD Puadon and MTV VJ Kat Alano

DENISE Albert and Jess Wilson

TONY Tony and Victoria Landon

SEBASTIAN, Anne Alvarez and Embassy's hostess Erik Cruz

From page C1

endless, well-loved Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte, and Omega's local corporate celebrity couple Lucy Torres and Richard Gomez's watch.

Omega Philippines general manager Edith Dychiao gave us a tour of the new Omega boutique together with Luxuria managing directors Ivan Yao and Emerson Yao, and Omega marketing manager Beth Marcilla.

Browsing around, our eye was attracted. The new boutique featured furniture and display systems, especially designed and made by Omega to showcase its complete range of timeless collections.

Also featured were elegant designs from the Omega Fine Jewellery Collection, including The Jewelry vase is a perfect complement to the launch of the innovative De Ville Hour Vision watch.

As Rhonnie Hontiveros told us during cocktails, "With De Ville Hour Vision, all of Omega's 202 new timepieces are showcased—all of them give a great performance and have a classical stylish look that will surely appeal to all Filipino watch connoisseurs."

Well, I was really convinced but my social crowd, so not settled for just checking over Omega's latest statement collection, pulongpo.

Steve Aoki in Manila

It has been almost a year when friend Suresh, pulongpo, have two Connie Mantle (cute) sons.

Never-Ones you could but an eyelash, Suresh has once again brought another world-class, music-mad artist DJ from the US—Steve Aoki aka Kid Millionaire.

Aoki played at the swinging Embassy hotspot/club. The gig was in cooperation with Let-X-Bar and Styles Promotions.

Music were spinning excitedly at the club's signature sound as the crowd were anticipating the grand entrance of the Lil superstar, who is a favorite among Hollywood's partying pack, to-but, dabbling.

And it was indeed a sensational experience for us who partied with Suresh, as Steve Aoki did not disappoint.

Kid Millionaire, as he's popularly called, did an electrifying and breathtaking display of showmanship. He even got on top of the DJ booth and jumped into the crowd in a stage dive that wow! No one would forget. Fueled as the partygoers were by spirited Smooth cocktails, watermelon, pelongpo.

Celebrities spotted at the event were actor Epi Quizon, beautiful model Kelly Misa, dazzling VJs Anne Curtis and Kat Alano-hot, hot model Ormaan Gadhoni, party icon Tim Yap, PR and event czar SP Reyes, gorgeous actress Chesko Kostko, actor Billy Crawford, beautiful Iza Calzado, very sexy Juliana Palermo, and many more!

It was truly an impressive event, thanks to Suresh. We asked what drinks spirit we could try with Bacardi. He tried Bacardi Cola, Libre (Bacardi, squeeze of lime and cola), Bacardi Mojito (Bacardi, mint leaves, lime, sugar and a dash soda), and Bacardi daiquiris and Pina colada.

He reminder we emerged from Embassy at almost 4 a.m., and, would you believe, with no regrets, dahlings.

Service for Peace

Sixty young delegates of the Service for Peace (SFP) from Europe and Asia and their Filipino counterparts will sign a "Resolution of Peace" to strengthen advocacy for global peace, pulongpo.

During a press conference at Edsa Shangri-La, the delegates agreed to work to achieve "the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations," which include the eradication of poverty and hunger and the development of global partnership for cooperation in fostering progress.

Chair of the SFP was Gen. Leonidas "Bally" Bayard Ortiz. Guest speaker was former senator Joey Lina.

Caroline Salomonsen, SFP Philippines executive director, had this to say: "We can wage propaganda peace through community service and the speedy installation of satellites at the grassroots level. Peace begins within ourselves through service to others."

"Someone to the SFP program is the education and character development of young people," Ortiz said. "That's why we are advocating volunteering among theirs/better understand the problems around them and pursue unity and cooperation."

The SFP is a non-government organization which began in New York in 1961. It was established in the Philippines in 2003.

Among SFP's programs are the renovation of the Mudmuk (Manila school) in Cubao, Quezon City; the holding of leadership trainings for the youth; providing livelihood programs for the Aetas in Pampanga; and resolving conflicts between Muslims and Christians in Mindanao.

Currently, SFP is heightening awareness of volunteering among our young people through community service. Biel was so proud of the awesome young foreign and Filipino delegates who, against all odds, stayed with poor families and learned Filipino culture at the grassroots, pulongpo.

PHILIPPINE Ambassador to Switzerland Manuel A.J. Yankelevich

QUEZON City Mayor Sonny Belmonte

ADEL Tamano

ELLEN and Roberto Gaudio of Tory's

MASTERCARD's Justin Dayrit and Chris Pacion

SERVICE for Peace delegates Lucas Schreyer (USA), Bake Koetsier (Holland), Pascal Holler (Austria) and Joan Pigos (Spain)

PEOPLE who care: Mon Leyva and Pabsy Leyva

COL. RAMON Mateo, Ophie Reyes and Major Ellen M. Mason, AFP(s)

ENGINEER Neal Alonte Alonzo, and Bobbie Honolulu M. Alonzo

SUNA FORD and Michael Zaldax

GUEST speaker former senator Joey Lina with Service for Peace chairperson Gen. Bally Ortiz

GOINGS ON

Ballet school showcases Tchaikovsky's 'The Nutcracker'

SWINGING SNOWFLAKES, waltzing flowers and dancing soldiers. Toni Lopez Gonzalez Ballet School breathes life to these characters as it stages "The Nutcracker" Nov. 4 and 11, 3 p.m., at the CCP Little Theater. "The Nutcracker," which is based on a German children's fairytale, is a well-loved Christmas ballet in fantastic, with music by Tchaikovsky. Toni Lopez Gonzalez, former principal dancer of Washington Ballet and Ballet Philippines, choreographs the different numbers for her students, with the grand pas de deux after Marius Petipa's. Gonzalez, founder and director of the school, is a second-generation ballet dancer. Toni Lopez Gonzalez Dance School, Sacerdotal-Corinthian Gardens, has been training future ballerinas since homecoming with the theme "Dreams, Still Of Back" Nov. 25, 2:30 p.m., at the Philamlife Auditorium, United Nations Avenue, Manila. Call 3521-1001 or 3521-3090/6563.

TONI Lopez Gonzalez Ballet School stages "The Nutcracker"

1992. The holiday performance marks its eighth production.

HOMECOMING. The Don Bosco High School Alumni Association Inc. (DHSAAI) will hold its 19th

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR: Alkor in three highly successful bazaar, Women's will again hold its carnival-theme bazaars at the Ballroom of Renaissance in Makati Hotel (formerly Mine World) Nov. 10, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Welcome 7+ dynamic and hardworking ladies are Celine Bautista, Pilin Barrameda, Linda Villadolgado, Chit Goho, president and chair Fanny Blanco, Fortune Ledesma, and Lita Ortaleo. Beneficiaries are Makabata Foundation and Victoria Foundation. Major credit cards will be accepted. Call 8439581, 8156669 (Jessy) and 09151883109. Their last bazaar for the year will be on Dec. 2 at Hotel Intercontinental.

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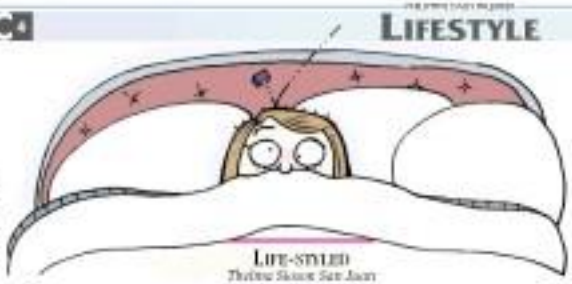

LIFE-STYLED
Thelma Skinner San Juan

I have developed a distrust for hotel rooms, opulent or chic or exotic. I have become more 'sensitive' to beyond-the-normal presence

Ghost-hunting in chic hotels

I'M NOT REALLY primitive when it comes to spirits, elementals and the like. I don't go out of my way to convince to them, nor even to point their situations. It's the other way around.

It must have been sometime around June or July 2001, two months before 9/11, when I realized that otherworldly entities—not only the corporate variety—loved to pick on me.

We were staying in a designer boutique hotel in New York, an "in" address that had been written up much in the Philippine Branch accountrements. I had dozed off in mid afternoon in my room when, as if bodi-matic, I sensed someone at the foot of the Frida headboard, headless like a vapor, her very long hair undulating as if in the wind, her spindly arms outstretched, pulling me into their breadbound.

Dreaming or not, I struggled to wake up—you know the feeling of having a nightmare, hoary. And I was pretty sure that heightened vision wasn't from Ryobi.

Since then, I have developed a distrust for hotel rooms, opulent or chic or exotic—and exactly the right ultimate to take for motifs that often get mislaid to junkers. I have become more—how to put it—"sensitive"—to beyond-the-normal presence. The more idyllic the accommodations, the more suspicious I am.

Why not? Sometime ago, in a 14th-century old mill inn in Salisbury, England, my room in the attic overlooked a postcard-pretty lake, with swans gliding on it. What a breathtaking scenery on early morning.

The middle of the night, however, my heart pounded to all kinds of slight sounds beyond my doorstep.

It is with such overdramatized imaginations as mine that my travel-mates Joe Klark with **Ethel Tiesbet** had gotten on used to it. In a presidential villa that came with an infinity-edge pool, two suites with real-time showers, his marvels covered, and so on, she knew me enough to accept that our two nights would be beyond dual confinement (with me, who else?).

In the afternoon, as I prepared to take a dip in the pool and had rolled the curtain shut to close it a bit, I thought I heard a "pssst" in my room. Thinking it was the staff that had come for the pool cleaning, I opened out for the lavender to wait outside my room, until another "pssst" came. It felt like it was coming from the same spot in the bedroom. I stepped out to an empty living room and found.

Uh, oh. That night I planted myself on Alfred's hand-upon bed, no matter that it would be her first time to share a bed in decades—a mixed decision (mine, not Ethel's solid sentiment). It rained out, because that night the curtain spasm was plunged into darkness because of power interruption.

The next morning, guess one re-shared in the curtained, except in my room. The engineering staff couldn't figure out why, after restoring with the electricity for an hour or so. Since it was checkout time, and the remote-controlled curtains couldn't be drawn, I requested the butler to hold the lights...and keep me company—while I hurriedly packed in the dark, then made my brisk exit, saying goodbye and "treasure my intrusion" to the unseen powers-that-be in my room. (Why do I always have a mania with "powers that be"?)

But don't get me wrong, not every hotel room has underdated or strange vibes on me. There are rooms which seem don't really feel anything, if not good vibes. We've stayed in exalted locations like Paris or London, or leisurely sun-seen places like Hawaii or Phuket/Krabi, and nothing happened.

But come to think of it, in Phuket Beach, didn't I hear homecoming and forced-chilling sounds at 2 a.m.? What have been a sweet-serious job, my friends told me. At first? But it was a lovely feeling in this historic hotel, where the likes of Charlie Chaplin and Jackie Kennedy had once stayed. Such chic hoaxings.

From the mayor

"It was the best fashion show ever," from the mayor"—**Bernard Arnault**, the LVMH chairman, said this about the much-talked-about fourth fashion show pulled off by **Karl Lagerfeld** in the Great Wall of China recently.

Costing over $30 million to stage, it was the first time a fashion show was staged atop the Great Wall itself, a 4,000-mile-long landmark. The runway, of course, didn't use the bricks—just 40 meters long (meaning only 80 models, eight being the lucky number among the Chinese).

Fendi flew in more than 60 staff. The brand-right seats for the celebrity audiences—led by the Chinese prime minister's wife seated beside the much—were even heated. The show also marked the relaunch of the icon in Baguette bag of Brad.

According to Women's Wear Daily, Chloe ranks third in Frank sales in Asia, after Hong Kong and South Korea, but is expected to overtake those two soon. Louis Vuitton sales in Shanghai, according to WWD, are more than in Chicago. WWD noted the store "Google-Eet."

GOINGS ON

Photography workshop Nov. 10

THE FIRST ACADEMY OF COMPUTER arts will hold a workshop by renowned photographer Sonny Joaquin on Nov. 10, 1:30-5:30 p.m. The Ro-G Academy of Computer Arts is located at 2/F Sunlife Building, 8737 Paseo de Roxas, Avenue corner Sec. Gil Puyat Boulevard Avenue, Makati City. Call 8867284 to 26 or visit www.ftvdacademy.net for more information.

COMPUTERS. The CalCoal Center of the Philippines and the Manila Broadcasting Company present "The Laboratory Press," Lorenzo Ramos Christmas celebration on Dec. 18-21 on the CCP grounds. The highlight is "Mang ng Pasko," a choral competition among top-rated children's choirs in Manila. Call 7290314, 09209999999 or 09164466466.

EXHIBIT. The Department of Executive (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education support the exhibit of the Mystery of the Shroud of Turin, which runs until Dec. 8 at the Megamall, Mall, SM Mall of Asia. Call 8952988 or 8988870 or log on to www.shroudofturin.ph or www.shroudofturin.com.ph.

RAFFLE PRIZES. Fresh Supermarket at Shoemart Lite Pillar is giving away color television sets, digital video disc players, washing machines through its Lifestyle Raffle Bonanza. For every P1,000 worth of purchase, a customer gets he is raffle coupons. Promo period is until Dec. 15. Grand draw is on Dec. 16, at 6 p.m. Call 8931384.

SPECIAL RAFFLE. Mabuhi Shangri-La's Garden Event Café presents Mission Pub at Shangri-La Plaza, until Dec. 31. Diners are signing up for a free membership for lunch or dinner but not get a raffle stub for a chance to win the top-of-the-line luxury SUV. Call 6340386 or 6728888 local 7388/7389.

Contributing Editor: Ria Francisco-Prieto

LIFESTYLE

BEAUTY

Beauty tip: For fairer skin, use whitening skin-care lines that can make your skin lighter from head to toe.

With proper care and the help of Gluta products, fair skin is yours to have

Dreaming in white

UNLIKE MOST FILIPINAS who wish they were lighter skinned, I actually wish I were darker. I guess it's like those Westerners who want what they don't have and so spend a lot on expensive spray tanning procedures.

KNOCKOUT!

Ria Francisco-Prieto

But for most Filipinos, it's the other way around. Out of a perception that they can be, from even a shade to using face powder that is two shades lighter. The result: We,

Robinsons Supermarket

Go healthy and nutritious.

It's a brand new start to a better life at Robinsons Supermarket!

Eat Well Spend Less

OWNER Cielo Fetalvero

CIELO Salon

Local products with high standards

BATH AND BODY JUNKIES WOULD be glad to know that there is a new line that is exquisitely sensual, of great quality, well packaged, reasonably priced and sentimental enough that a little goes a long way.

The best part is that it is proudly Filipino, and it can hold its own against imported brands.

One of the owners, Bo Bautista-Ivey, had worked closely with prestigious European and American cosmetics' brands for over 10 years. Even when she resigned from the company, her fastidious taste stayed with her. Her first thought of formulating her own bath line with the quality she was used to but with a reasonable price tag. She narrated it struck it by accident based on requests from friends. She said a friend must have a "foreign" name for people to take notice of it amid the sea of competition.

There are five groups of fragrances with four products in each group: Body buff (P225/ 120g), shower gel (P440/ 200ml), body milk (P395/ 150ml) and shea spray (P225).

The scent stays on your body and lingers in the fashionable way when you are done.

Lavender Garden's scent is similar to Diorissimo. Ginger Patch reminded me of the Origin's Ginger line. Olive Grove is a fragrance composition of "Isa's Delicious Fruits and Precious olive oil line. It has a masculine note as it may be more suitable for men.

Tea Fusion is similar to Elizabeth Arden's Green Tea fragrance line. Vanilla Tint is like Laura Mercier's Crème Brûlée line but slightly subtler.

Bloch & Ivy products are available at Shoppertise and select Rustan's supermarkets.

New colors

Simply stylish Cielo Salon, this modern glass-and-steel oasis is on the ground floor of the Coliseum Building in the corner of Ayala Avenue and Buendia Street, Makati.

MAKEOVER 911

Kitty Salas

Owner Cielo Fetalvero had rave delights about us how she wanted her debut color to be. Over the years as an experienced makeup artist, with a degree in cosmetology from the Cosmo via Aesthetic Studies and becoming makeup artist for Make-up Forever, she has been exposed to numerous talents but none of them hit the spot.

Now that she has her own salon, her main objective is to bring back the age of glamour when women dressed up to go to the salon. That's the era of Elizabeth Taylor, Audrey Hepburn, and Ingrid Bergman as confronted with the era of the metrosexuals such as Claudia Schiffer and Cindy Crawford, when women dragged their butt into salon doors and looked as if they had just rolled out of bed.

I have used several some of the services.

Haircut by Arlet Dupuyo, a senior stylist, costs P600. I had my haircut last due to a very fashioned schedule so my dark roots were visible, the ends desperated dressed, and the crown was flat and claiming out so bad you could see my scalp.

John kept my hair long but removed two inches from the tips and gave me enough bounce at the crown. My hair looked instantly thicker with more body and was more manageable.

Debuté Joy Lopez gave me a shaken base color—medium brown—to suit the upcoming season, and she wore very fine bright lights to shades of gold, all under Arlet's supervision. It flattered my natural skin tone even without makeup.

The hair treatment from Redken's line of professional hair products was like a tall drink of water on my dehydrated strands, restoring shine, durability and a thicker texture.

I trusted most with Marissa as she gave the best shoulder and scalp massages at P300. She knows exactly as if by instinct the exact spot that caused me discomfort and she would not let up until those knots were away.

She also gave me a manicure (P350), but you must specify if you do not want your cuticles removed because she would automatically do so.

She also threaded my eyebrows and upper lip very efficiently.

Joy Velasco did my pedicure (P500) in a perfect semi-square with flat tops and rounded edges.

What I love about it: It is the first salon with Wi-Fi connection so I could actually answer important e-mails and continue research on the Internet. You can be glamorous and efficient at the same time!

They also do spa-herbs manicure (P1,500) and detoxifies (which may set P6,000 because it takes two days and a minimum of four hours a day to complete).

You may call Cielo Salon at 908 3600.

E-mail the author at kitty@talkabout.com

GINGER Patch

Dreaming in white

From page D9

they have white irises but the newly created dark-colored—six straight by coordination.

The better option is to put a whitening skin care line that will get you lighter from head to toe, and not just certain parts of your body. Lotion, whitening products are abundant and have become less expensive.

Where I went given Clinic White and Ultra products, I was so intrigued by them. But since I didn't think I needed to get your whitest. I asked my friends in the office to try the products.

Three days using them, I've noticed that three people began to tell me that they could actually see a difference in their skin tone. Their skin visibly look whiter. Those who weren't too natural in using the products didn't get the best results, but that's just for the reason for any other skin care product. When it comes to these things, dedication and patience are really needed for optimum results.

Each bag of Glam White and Prime set comes with the complete line: Facial Wash ($1.99) that moisturizes as well as helps accumulate and neutralize excess oil; Bleach Cream ($9.99) that promotes collagen synthesis on the skin; Renewal Powder ($2.49) that makes skin look flawless and comes in three shades; Deodorizer and Antiperspirant ($2.49) that promises to whiten skin in a few days; Soap ($0.99) that gently removes dirt and excess oil to reveal healthier, lighter skin; and Lotion ($2.79). But isn't as a whitening and toning cream to reveal softer, smoother skin.

A reminder: Just do a patch test before using these products to head off any allergic reaction. Also, stay away from the sun, or even when wearing the right, use an umbrella and spread on some SPF before leaving the house. With proper care and the help of Christ-produces, fair skin is easier to have.

Superfine makeup for Asian women

DEVELOPED EXCLUSIVELY for Asian women, Bobbi Brown Skin Superfine Compact Makeup SPF 15 PA++ is the most advanced powder foundation yet.

Combining a blend of oil-free, water-activated, it helps skin look flawlessly beautiful.

Within swipe of the sponge, skin tone is evened out and imperfections are instantly flawed.

The high-tech, ultra-modern formula creates a naturally natural-looking finish. The look of an evenness, blotchiness and redness are eliminated. This means moisture and skin tone-color formula leaves skin looking silky-soft to the touch.

The revolutionary new powder process used in this advanced formula delivers an exceptionally light weight, natural looking makeup with a velvety feel. Included is protect to UVA and UVB rays is the primary cause of premature aging of the skin. Therefore, Clinique believes skin should be protected at all times. That's why Bobbi's Skin Superfine Compact Makeup SPF 15 PA++ offers daily protection from the sun's damaging rays.

• A blend of chemical and non-chemical sunscreens (Titanium Dioxide) provides broad spectrum UVA/UVB protection, helping keep skin looking healthier.

• Tocopherol and Ascorbyl Tetraisopalmitate are naturally powerful antioxidants that shield skin from free radical damage.

• Squalane and Sodium Hyaluronate are moisturizing and conditioning agents, which help maintain skin's delicate moisture balance.

• A cloth-of-the-oil mist liquid soap powder technology, during which liquid evaporates, leaving a soft powder. During the process, fatty oil particles are encased in the powder contributing to the cosmetic silkyness.

• Special "Film Formers" and ultra-light spherical polymers help contributes to the light and easy texture, velvety fragrance with the liquid evaporates.

• Micro-Mirrored Pigment Technology gives the product the ability to become more opaque when applied to imperfections for hiding on a stronger opacity just in the areas of the skin tone. Skin tone appears undiminished. Organic soy Claris soothe minerals, and the foundation goes completely undetected.

• Capillary Shell Technology recognizes changing skin conditions, processes oil and dirt, breaks through and maintains skin's moisture balance.

Bobbi's Skin Superfine Compact SPF 15 PA++ is available in eight diverse shades designed specifically for the complexion of Asian women.

Exclusively available at Rustan's Makati, Tower Alabang, Greenhills, Cebu Ayala, Ecoland, Robinsons Place, Beauty Bar, Glorietta and Mall of Asia.

Smart nail solutions

CARONIA, THE PROFESSIONS brand in hand and polish and nail care, introduces a new range of products: Nail Hardener & Basecoat, Solvent Remover, Dry & Gelcle Conditioner, and Fast-Dry Top Coat. These smart nail care solutions in a bottle are made with top-grade ingredients to ensure professional nail care everywhere and at home.

The Caronia Nail Hardener & Basecoat helps strengthen nails and, if applied before your choice of Caronia nail polish color, serves as a base coat that smoothens out ridges, resulting in strong nails and a smooth, even polish.

The Caronia Fast-Dry Top Coat uses materials imported from Europe to provide an investment to your manicure/pedicure. It has a setting time of 60-90 seconds and dries in 3 minutes. That's 50 percent faster than your regular top coat. And because it's high gloss, the colored Caronia nail polish simply shines through.

The Caronia Gelcle Dry & Cuticle Conditioner is a moisturizing cuticle softener that creates a layer of protection on newly polished nails so they don't chip and peel. It won't ruin your tips and hues. This boost delivers your nail polish to dry without smudging, while it helps keep your cuticles healthy and soft by preventing splitting.

After your manicure or pedicure session in the salon or at home, clean your natural nails, polish implements with Caronia Solvent.

All formulas are HALF-vegetarian and vegan in a family of 10 bottles or a standard 20 ml size. Whether you're a nail care professional, manicurist or just a nail chick, these salon-quality products are easy to use.

Caronia's Pro-Care products are now available in Landmark, All Department Stores, Rustan's Department Stores, Mercury Drug Store, Ever Gotesco, Saint Moritz, Shoppers, Cherry Pharmacies, and other leading supermarkets, department & drug stores nationwide.

Goodbye to sensitive skin

NIVEA HAS DEVELOPED the perfect formula that provides relief and protection to sensitive skin in order to minimize natural irritation and reduce symptoms to external influences.

Skin experts at Nivea have discovered that reactions to the skin's natural defense mechanism could easily to everyday influences such as stress, temperature changes, strong cosmetic products and even jewelry.

Nivea Sensitive combines Eucerine, an ingredient extract from licorice weed known for its instant soothing and anti-irritation properties, purified, moisturizing complex, a combination of lipid-mixture and moisturizer that stimulates and reinforces the skin's natural resistance to harmful external influences. The unique formulation instantly calms and strengthens sensitive skin while keeping it well-moisturized.

Included in the Nivea formula are steps to cleansing milk/makeup remover, day and night face creams, body lotion and deodorant. To avoid irritation, these products contain no colorants and no fragrances.

Way Up SOUTH!

Tagaytay Highlands

Just an hour south of Metro Manila, a unique kind of watchtower lords it over the scenic hills and ridges of Tagaytay.

The Tagaytay Highlands, a pioneer in leisure estate creation, affords vantage views all around, including the privileged panorama of Taal Lake and Volcano, as well as vistas of realty developments growing southwards from the metropolis.

Time and visionary effort have been invested in configuring this world-class complex that now serves as a beacon for lifestyle pursuits amidst prime recreational communities.

Tagaytay Highlands leads the way up south!

As the premier leisure haven with easy accessibility to and from Metro Manila, this pacesetting bastion of the high life continues to enhance its state-of-the-art, nature-hugging amenities, and to expand its tapestry of endless possibilities.

Now the stakes are raised once more for a new paradigm for private sanctuaries with the launching of yet another phase of development at The Greenlands.

Owner / Developer

BELLE CORPORATION

(0460483-0824; 0276687-2885
(0917)524-9090

www.TagaytayHighlands.com

IT'S ALL HAPPENING WAY UP SOUTH!

The Verandas at Sarabaya Hills

It's the American South with its laidback grandeur that is evoked and recreated at The Verandas.

A genteel world of leisurely rhythms, allowing unhurried time to pass by ... while you're ensconced in a lovely home

as comfort zone. And partake of the slow, graceful delights of Nature all around.

Imagine yourself seated on a rocking chair in your own corner of a wrap-around porch or terrace, enjoying the bracing lake breeze while facing a mountainside.

You indulge in the privilege of watching the grass grow, the flowers bloom in hours of splendor, the trees rise as vine-strewn sentinels ... while the rest of the contoured landscape spell your affinity with an idyllic environment.

The Verandas at The Greenlands offers the gentle cadence of leisure living.

Acquiring a home in The Verandas allows easy access to the two championship courses in Tagaytay Highlands and The Midlands. Both are playable by Highlands and Midlands golf club members, so that the reciprocity allows enjoyment of 36 holes of golf.

The upcoming Lakeside Course will start with a 9-hole addition adjacent to the Midlands golf course. A second 9-hole addition will be situated a stone's throw from The Verandas.

This is a welcome feature for homeowners in The Greenlands Community, where utmost care for Nature is always given premium priority.

The luxury of playing any of the three courses — for a total of 54 holes of golf — is but part of the beauty of a recreational lifestyle in a prime leisure environment.

All over the Tagaytay Highlands complex that includes The Midlands and The Greenlands, world-class facilities and amenities are continuously upgraded, while more family-oriented and eco-friendly activities are being organized.

Tagaytay Highlands

Developer: BELLE CORPORATION

(046) 483-0824
(02) 687-2885
(0917) 526-9090

www.TagaytayHighlands.com

IT'S EXCLUSIVE, IT'S READY, AND IT COMES WITH A FREE GOLF SHARE!**

Reserving a lot in the exclusive community of The Verandas entitles you to a proprietary share in Tagaytay Midlands Golf Club, at no extra cost!

Take advantage of easy payment plans now, while lots are still available.

LIFESTYLE

FASHION

Spanish splendor

story on page E2

LUXURIOUS daywear in silk, taffeta, chiffon and four-ply crepe

Spanish splendor

'Alhambra,' Inno Sotto's latest fashion extravaganza, referenced El Greco, the Castillian court, Franciscan robes and other staples of Iberian culture

Photos by Chito Vesina

SILK taffeta wedding gown inspired by the colors of Zaragozian murals

STANDING ovation for Inno Sotto and Bea Valdes

AFTER 27 PROLIFIC YEARS in the fashion industry, Inno Sotto remains at the top of his game. Together with world-renowned accessories designer Bea Valdes, the prince (although this author would like to crown him King) of Philippine fashion recently presented Alhambra, a show that featured a 35-piece collection that combined the designer's trademark elegance and exquisite detailing with curves, romance and OOMPHH glamour.

The much-awaited show, which was held at the ballroom of the Makati Shangri-La, opened with a short spiel by socialite Isabel Preysler. The Manila-based beauty, the former wife of Julio and mother of Enrique Iglesias, has known Sotto for 20 years. She flew to town to watch the show and lend the designer (or his Filipino ingenuity).

This was then followed by an even shorter speech by the usually-publicity-shy designer: "I'm doing a thousand dresses," he said. Obviously an edge, as most designers can behave a show. Sotto thanked everyone, including event host Blibo Unabia Cojuangco, for the support they've shown him and the Victoria Foundation, a charity he has supported for many years.

Sotto then invited everyone to join him and Valdes on their journey to Alhambra.

Luxurious fabrics

Moslem Moorish-inspired music and dramatic lighting against a backdrop that mimicked the graceful arabesques and intricate woodcarvings of the Alhambra signaled the start of the show. With folded hoodie, the tradesman-behind model of the moment Mich Ayala as the minstrel the stage clad in right-fitting trousers, boots and a cropped jacket with full-sleeves, to open the duo. Image must-get from the show.

Apples Alvarin-Sadhwani

Sotto's slow pieces came in luxurious fabrics like silk, taffeta, chiffon and four ply crepe, with just the right touches of whimsy and wit in the form of pearls and gems. Volume was a major characteristic of this particular collection. Even apparent in the dramatic jackets, sleeves and ballroom dresses that came in a variety of hues inspired by options sold in the markets, such as sage, curry and red clay.

Sotto also used a stunning bright orange that was reminiscent, as he describes, "the sun in Spain when it hits the buildings at a particular time of day."

A very luxe sportswear feel was also evident in the form of loose silken pieces that looked comfortable yet ultra-chic. These pieces, which one can easily transform into a bubble dress or top, gave the collection a thoroughly modern edge. There was pyramid shirt dress, although known for his elegantly feminine pieces, continues to evolve and thus surprises his previous output.

"I was inspired by the juxtaposition of the Roman Catholic religion and Islamic culture in Alhambra," says Sotto. He also made references to paintings by El Greco, the spanish court and Franciscan robes. His bridal gown, worn by emerging Brazilian model Carolina, was, in fact, fashioned after the robes of Augustinian monks.

The designer made use of 27 yards of silk taffeta to create the high-necked, full-sleeved wedding gown. The elaborately beaded cloak (Castille) has flat, cut-around the model's head-to-toe celebrate context to the gown's voluminous splendor.

Sight to behold

The evening collection was also a sight to behold. Isabel Preysler-type and Manila's other who crossed their necks to show buttery visions of their most precious. The close relations were a series of black crepe and crepe de chine gowns that were subtly sexy and incredibly encasing in their simplicity.

Again, volume was the general order of the day, or night, for that matter, as models walked down the runway in frilly opus folds of rich materials that were sometimes accented with feathers. The last piece, a white, feathered silk taffeta gown with bubble sleeves and a high neck, worn by Bea Bollen, was a showstopper and the perfect high note to end the presentation.

Throughout the show, Bea Valdes' exquisite adornments complemented Sotto's collection. Valdes' jewelry and bags, which are available in specialty stores like Barneys New York and Harvey Nichols in Hong Kong, are all treasures that mix tradition and old-as-abandoned style to a look. Her pieces were nothing short of breathtaking and magical, fresh and with deliberate hints of the exotic.

Director Ariel Lozada created a mood of mystery and drama through music and lighting, while Patrick Power and his team ensured a high-fashion look that featured three layers of extra-long false eyelashes.

At the curtorial front there is a clear, Sotto received yet another well-deserved standing ovation. Most industry-denizens present during the show came to the same conclusion. There really is nothing quite like an Inno Sotto show. So no-wonder he's still at the top of the heap.

E-mail the author at abalbuena@inquirer.com.ph

Alhambra was presented by Hanson, Globe Asiatic, Boston's, Nokia in cooperation with Philippine Tatler, Belo Medical Group, Bergstrom, PostFix, QTV, Mod-A-Chandon, Tiki, Preserved Pleroxin Brew, Vivian Gardens, Sun Miguel Homes by Pearl de Richelieu Perez) Hosted by Pearls Rose Directed by Ariel Lozada Produced by Joji Dingcong and MoC Cuan Creative direction by Bella Ekkida

VOLUME and exquisite detailing were the order of the day — and night!

Paris when it sizzles

WE'VE FOLLOWED BETTY Salo's career since its first came to Manila and opened a boutique called Dee in Bacolod's in 1991, followed by his made-to-order business and then his own boutique called Wink in 2001. Through the years, we've even had a number of special shows, showstoppers all, designed and executed by him.

Salo's pieces are always feminine, tasteful and wearable—never over the top, and yet, always stylish and up-to-the-minute. So, it came as no surprise to hear that the designer was chosen by Jewelcraze to present a collection that would complement their jewelry line during the Gold-ex/Philippine South Sea Pearl Gala Night at the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, France, Nov 7.

Salo's collection for this milestone event is inspired by the four elements of nature: fire, wind, water and earth. As such, he has created pieces in jersey, chiffon and tulle in blues, oranges, whites and browns. To highlight Jewelcraze's lustrous pearls, the designer has wisely decided to forego headwork. Instead, he's using photo-etched harness-crane details and depth.

The fashion and jewelry show will be directed by Bobby Carmona and will feature top Filipina models like Gisha Benitez, Rissa Mynampell, Valerie de los Santos, Isabel Rosen.

ONDYOMYDS

GASMAG Yorkstock

KARME Arabian

Connect the dots

IF YOU'RE SHOPPING AROUND for brands, clothing and accessories that are not totally mainstream but are completely stylish and fashionable, we've got good news for you. Dondot., a multibrand store that offers unique finds, is opening in Greenbelt 5 early this month.

According to Carla Bolivar, the creative mind behind the store, the aim is to look out for seasonal brands that can be made accessible to more people. As such, dotdotdot will be carrying brands like Karine Arabian, Bridesmaids, Opening Ceremony, G-Star, Whyred, Gaspard Yurkievich, 3.1 and Ellyr Kalimeron. Two of Alexander McQueen and Chloe cuts also look forward to pieces from both brands' bridge lines, Mc and See by Chloe, respectively.

"The store is inspired by nature. It will be a peaceful shopping environment with no loud music and lots of little nooks where shoppers just might chance upon something they'll really love," says Bolivar.

DPENNIG Dressings

SEE by Chloe

You go, Girlie!

FASHION BUZZ

MODEL GIRLIE BERMUDEZ makes it to thearrondalou.blogspot.com, a site that's very popular among fashion-philes and that features celebrity-dressed people from all over the globe.

The PMAP member and frequent fashion favorite was in Central, Hong Kong when Lane Crawford senior public relations executive Cher Hwang, accompanied by the cartoonist himself, Scott Schuman, asked to take her photograph because they found what she was wearing interesting.

In his blog, the cartoonist says, "I love how the bag real-

MODEL Girlie Bermudez in Hong Kong

is brings a lot of color to this look."

runway report runway report runway report runway report runway report runway report

Culte Femme's new line is inspired by the Duchess of Windsor and Michelle Pfeiffer

LUXURIOUS fabrics in neutral tones for a light and airy feel

METALLICS and animal prints are here to stay.

Dressy but subdued

Text by Mary Ann I. Rafols
Photos by Rudel Batoon

LOOKING ALTOGETHER SUNNY, elegant and in-season may be quite a feat even for the dedicated fashionista. Blending sophistication and sex appeal aren't becomes effortless only when the knows where to shop.

Culte Femme is known for its strong sense of feminine style... be it glamorous, bohemian or preppy—with a lot of whimsical colors and prints. The Holiday 2007 Collection, unveiled on Dec. 15 in Rustan's Makati, is its first take on using dressy luxurious fabrics in a muted palette, still conveying easy and feminine allure in a low-key manner.

Designer Heidy Weber-Tantoco personally chose the fabrics used to achieve a light and airy feel, making it wearable... even post-holidays and the start of summer.

"I wanted an understated and fluid feel to it. Nothing too strong, and no hard lines, like I used voile: a very fine kind of cotton, chiffon, silk charmeuse, silk jersey and satinized twill, which is a smoother kind of twill," Tantoco said.

Black and gray are not the only colors of choice this season. Completely doing away with dark neutrals, the collection worked on subdued but playful colors, such as pink champagne, ivory, slate gray and chartreuse.

HANDY Weber-Tantoco

For the new collection, Tantoco drew inspiration from two fashion icons: the elegance of the Duchess of Windsor and the disco-diva style of Michelle Pfeiffer in her 80s classic "Scarface"). "I wanted something that is elegant but not too proper for the modern-day woman, and sexy but not overly sexy," said the designer.

Tantoco incorporated the polished and older look into the collection by designing clothes that would accent a silhouette of strong shoulders and cropped waists. The general idea is evident on sleeves—long, puff, flared and cuffed—and skirts—belted waists, and wide-leg trousers were key elements.

The clothes were big on details such as curded scallops, ruffles, pleats, ribbons, buttons. The standouts in the fashion show also donned gloves and scarves here to complete the "Duchess look."

Modern touch

To add a modern touch to the seeming comeback of the '90s, the clothes and accessories were accented with animal prints and metallic colors. High-waisted, hip-hugging and slim-fitting skirts and pants gave the requisite oomph.

Prices of tops, dresses and trousers range from P800-P2,000, while skirts and dresses don't go beyond P3,000.

The new collection is affordable and wearable by the modern Filipina, the kind of woman who juggles her career and family, and who knows what is important. Tantoco said. "A woman who is in touch with her strength and individuality, and is definitely not a trouble-some. She's strong, but not too serious... A woman who likes to enjoy and have fun."

Tantoco established Culte Femme in November 2003 as a private label for the ladies department of Rustan's. Culte Femme pieces are available at Rustan's Department Stores in Makati, Shangri-La Edsa, Alabang and Cebu.

One-stop travel shop

THE TRAVEL CLUB RECENTLY marked the opening of its flagship store in Trilogma with Primer Group of Companies' president and CEO Jimmy Thai in attendance.

The event drew a crowd composed of Manila's top fashion and business personalities. Also in attendance were The Travel Club spokespersons, PDI colors, Miss Trans Priscy-Nikki, Instructional speaker Francis Kong, fashion designer Randy Ortiz, and dynamic couple Arena and Ernie Lopez.

The night's main event began with the unveiling of the store windows featuring some of the country's top models on mannequin duty. A fashion show showcasing the latest in travel bags, apparel and accessories followed.

PDI'S Trans Priscy-Nikki and Primer Group of Companies president and CEO Jimmy Thai

The store, located on the second level of Trilogma, is a 600-sq.m shopping space that houses a comprehensive collection of world-renowned brands such as Samsonite, Victorinox, The North Face, American Tourister, Columbia, Hogren, Eagle Creek and many more.

Today, with over 28 stores nationwide plus a few more to open in Indonesia, Vietnam and Singapore, The Travel Club continues to deliver quality and cutting-edge travel solutions. Definitely, a one-stop shop to all your travel needs.

The Travel Club Trilogma houses a comprehensive collection of world-renowned brands such as Samsonite, Victorinox, The North Face, American Tourister, Columbia, Hogren, Eagle Creek and many more

IMAGE model Anne Curtis.

MEL O-Tha's modern vintage collection

Oldies but cuties

IT WAS A NIGHT OF GLITZ, glamour, and all that jazz. Mel Otha treated guests to a spectacle of old Hollywood glam on the runway as it featured Freeway's Holiday Collection. The fashion show was a display of everything vintage, whimsical and avant-garde.

Embassy Super Club was transformed into a 1920s French-inspired atelier. Brocade walls stood against the angular catwalk. Two embossed box doors beside the digital fireplace served as entrances and exit for the fashion show.

Models were made up into beautiful 1920s glamour girls. The collection featured clothes that used pleating and inching reminiscent in a more casual manner.

Orlina used holiday colors of pomegranate red, racing green, emerald green and tan teal, with touches of black, white and grey for this collection. To match the vibrant hues, he used a variety of intricate fabrics to create structured avant piece, soft flowy drapes, practical and comfy stretch jerseys, faux animated wells, even a luxurious gem-colored satin charmeuse.

Freeway student Anne Curtis then appeared from behind an intricate opening door wearing a white mini dress with elaborate ruffles. She was the perfect sight to sign an elegant, elegant night.

FREEWAY'S Holiday 2007 collection is all about old Hollywood glam.

BOOKS

LIVING Stars

Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

Lito Ernie G. Velasco

REGINE TOLENTINO

I FIRST LEARNED ABOUT the book "The Secret" by Rhonda Byrne while watching an episode of "Oprah." Then, on the set of "Shall We Dance," I found myself discussing the book with [fellow judges] Andre Limatoc and Douglas Nicerio. Turned out that Mark Andre had already read the book and he concurred that he got so much from it. I really enjoyed it. I am fascinated by the Law of Attraction, that light or waves light. It has changed my outlook in life and made me a better person...as a whole. Now, I choose to extend the same positive energy to other people. I definitely recommend it. It's easy to read and very clear since it has bullet points and great quotes from different leaders. I always go back to the pages that I find inspiring.

Reported: Sam Diego Jr.

LOUIE HEREDIA

I USUALLY UNWIND in the garden of my parents' home in Quezon City. At dusk, I sit and drink light beer. This is also where I read the newspaper in the morning. I like it because it's relaxing and, at the same time, I enjoy gardening. I was the one who spruced up this place and I didn't spend a single centavo. I just used whatever décor was available and artfully arranged the rocks. There's a soothing fountain here and it also allows a view of Sun Moon and the Mercullian mountains. Plus, it's windy here. Now, my family holds our Sunday get-togethers in the garden.

Reported: Sam Diego Jr.

MEDWIN MARFIL

MY PET COCO, a half-breed cairn, is a year old. He reminds me of Garfield—he's mischievous, cute, scary and has loads of attitude! But unlike the cartoon character, Coco doesn't like lasagna and is actually very sweet. He often sleeps between my feet. My three-year-old Jack Russ will never named Theodore is a lot like Garfield's buddy Odie. Although he's a loud yappy dog, he's very smart. To show their happiness, Coco goes on kitty bronco and Theodore eats back and forth across the room. Coco and Theodore are so loved by the entire household and in return they love us back.

Reported: Ivan Bilgera Jr.

'Bond' Roger Moore honored for helping children

ROGER Moore and wife Kristina Tholstrup distribute gifts to children at the Red Pearl day nursery in Budapest, Hungary. AP

UNITED NATIONS—BRITISH actor Roger Moore, famed for his portrayal of master spy Agent Bond, was honored Thursday for playing a different role—helping children for more than a decade as goodwill ambassador for the UN children's agency.

Moore received the Dag Hammarskjold Inspiration Award, named after the UN second secretary-general who was one of the most esteemed civil servants of the 20th century, from The Dag Hammarskjold Scholarship Fund for Journalism which was established for UNICEF correspondents.

Moore, celebrating his 80th birthday this month, said he became a United goodwill ambassador in 1991 after Audrey Hepburn, herself a goodwill ambassador, asked him to help at a UNICEF event.

"I would like to tell journalists something very important to my heart. Young people are children. They are not young grants. And I don't like them being called kids. I think it is disrespectful to children. So please, in all your reports write children," he said. AP

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GALLERIA

1 RENDITION + TBA
2 HALLOWEEN
3 BALLS of FURY
4 LUST CAUTION
5 HIDE and SEEK
6 30 DAYS of NIGHT
7 UNREST / STARDUST
8 MANILA PRIDE FEST
9 APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT
10 THE SEEKER: Dark is Rising

ERMITA

1 HIDE and SEEK
2 RESIDENT EVIL 3 / THE SEEKER
3 BALLS of FURY
4 RENDITION / UNREST
5 30 DAYS of NIGHT
6 LUST CAUTION
7 HALLOWEEN

METRO EAST

1 APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT
2 30 DAYS of NIGHT
3 HIDE and SEEK
4 HALLOWEEN
5 UNREST
6 BALLS of FURY
7 RESIDENT EVIL 3
8 LUST CAUTION

NOVALICHES

1 HALLOWEEN
2 30 DAYS of NIGHT
3 BALLS of FURY
4 HIDE and SEEK

PIONEER

1 HALLOWEEN
2 30 DAYS of NIGHT
3 LUST CAUTION
4 BALLS of FURY

STA. ROSA

1 HALLOWEEN
2 BRATZ
3 HIGHLANDER
4 HIDE and SEEK

LIPA

1 THE SEEKER: Dark is Rising
2 HIDE and SEEK
3 RESIDENT EVIL 3
4 STARDUST

DASMARINAS

1 BRATZ
2 HIGHLANDER
3 HALLOWEEN
4 HIDE and SEEK

IMUS

1 MR. WOODCOCK
2 HIDE and SEEK
3 HALLOWEEN
4 APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT

ANGELES

1 HALLOWEEN
2 KUNG FU FIGHTER
3 HIDE and SEEK
4 BUTTERFLY on a WHEEL

TARLAC

1 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
2 DON'T LOOK BACK
3 SHOOT 'EM UP

STARMILLS

1 KUNG FU FIGHTER
2 HALLOWEEN
3 APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT
4 HIDE and SEEK
5 BUTTERFLY on a WHEEL
6 RESIDENT EVIL 3

BACOLOD

1 SHOOT 'EM UP
2 RESIDENT EVIL 3
3 Indefine: TRIBU
4 HIDE and SEEK
5 DECEMBER BOYS
6 BUTTERFLY on a WHEEL

ILOILO

1 THE SEEKER: Dark is Rising
2 HIDE and SEEK
3 RESIDENT EVIL 3
4 STARDUST
5 MR. WOODCOCK
6 BUTTERFLY on a WHEEL

SM CINEMA
movietime SHOWTIME
Your life as a movie

CENTERSTAGE

A classic movie by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have to hold

Art: ARNELA. AYETTIRA

A. LIPIN

PUSAO DADDY

GARFIELD

BABY BLUES

ATOMIC AND WEEDY

LOVEKNOTS

KING MACHINE

SBH

DAILY CROSSWORD

HOROSCOPE

YOU KNOW WHAT: You're constantly evolving and changing. Your style and variety in dating may often set friends with others. Because of this, whether you seek it or not, you have a strong influence on others. You're driven and even more so after October 23, you have a big planning point in your life. You can create bright ideas and the best years of your life!

Birthdays of those born/who marked recent years in a big, ranges this fortunate, profound year:

ARIES (March 21 to April 20): What it is a strong year for you. You're ambitious and have unbeatable determination. Put together with others and make a difference. Also a wonderful year for love!

TAURUS (April 21 to May 20): You're determined and have a strong personality and family get together. You're also an intellectual this for that week starts. You want to share your home with others.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You have an optimistic today. But you're also a bit impulsive. Think about your good ideas. Have the courage to act, especially creative and writing.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your personality is strong and you're a natural leader. Financial today. Saturday, it's also an excellent day to relax. An important conversation with be profitable for you more successful today.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You're a natural leader. You're optimistic and happy. Sometimes you're a bit too much of a positive force in others. Why not take a vacation or another outing with your favorite people?

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Many of you will feel successful with your career and a new venture may be in the works today. Be a diplomat and work with the government and large institutions should be successful.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): What a year for you! You're a natural leader and have a strong personality. You're doing the work of many of your friends and groups. Around all of your relationships are and many succeed. Get ahead your goals for the future with others.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Relations with women, parents, husband and children. Is figuring out issues. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Be open to new ideas and not get bogged down with the future possibilities.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Career plans look exciting. Be careful with your finances. Don't take unnecessary risks. Big or further education. Money matters need attention. Take care of business.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Love and romance are in the air. Be careful with your way some good habits about others. Spend your time with those who make you feel good about yourself. You can also help others.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is an excellent day for romance. Important conversations with your lover can perfect just how friendly. People are attracted to your enthusiasm and love is growing deep.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): It's easy to work today because you're motivated. Be careful of hasty decisions. Don't let others take advantage of you. Be careful with your money.

CONCEPTS SU DOKU

Concepts Sudoku By Dave Green

	2				9		6	
3				4		1		5
	9				7			
1		7						
	8						7	
						4		6
			1				5	
4		2		7				9
	3		6				8	

Difficulty Level ★★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

6	3	5	9	1	7	8	2	4
1	8	2	4	3	6	5	7	9
7	4	9	5	8	2	1	3	6
9	8	7	6	4	3	2	5	1
2	1	4	8	7	5	9	6	3
5	6	3	1	2	9	7	4	8
3	5	1	3	9	4	7	9	6
8	7	6	2	9	6	4	1	5
4	9	6	7	5	1	3	8	2

Sweet Valley Gal

CERAMIC candle holder (below) and brass sunlit on the bed table

Teen star Rhian Ramos thinks suburbia is a perfect fit for her laid-back personality

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by Ryan Lim

EVEN THOUGH SHE IS A TWO-HOUR drive away from the GMA 7 studios, teen star Rhian Ramos doesn't mind a bit.

She obviously relishes the idea of living far from work—physically, geographically ...on her days off.

Above his cue be dating, she admits candidly. "I don't mind being around people all the time and I know it's part of the job, but once in a while I crave a little peace and quiet."

On such days, you'd most probably catch her cooped up in her bedroom, which was given a makeover at the old Rajones show "ang Bagbabago."

She calls her room her "private space."

"I'm my room, no one sits before me, even if I sleep the entire day," she quips. "There are days when I'm like: 'Don't talk to me, I'm stressed!'"

Apart from swooning, she also enjoys listening to music, watching DVDs of "Grey's Anatomy" and surfing the Net.

"I also update my blog for the Animax show 'Wild, Wild Pair,'" she notes.

Of course, she also does her homework in the computer room. (She's a high school junior in a home study program.)

"But lately my mom is getting annoyed because I'd rather watch 'Grey's Anatomy' than do schoolwork," she jests.

She also loves "taking long, leisurely baths" at home. "It's something I can't indulge in when I'm in a University location shoot."

At home, she takes care of 12-year-old Dobermian Mini-Claudia in Claw—"and my other pets, my three cats," which are displayed in the house.

She loves hanging out in the garden and house, which boasts a nature aura all that's "older than me."

Rhian's room Lay confirms: "That was the original set in our old house. I bought it before Rhian was born."

Rhian's mom is largely responsible for decorating the place.

"I fixed it up, but it was her dad [British expat Gareth Rivers II] who thought of having high ceilings. He wanted a home that's very open, with lots of big windows so it's the light in and to downstairs the view," Lay recounts.

Rhian chose Ben her mom's décor mom as "modern Asian."

"I chose most of the pieces of furniture," Lay reveals. "But my sister [GMA artist Gina Lee-Lopez (da Drama)] also put in an idea or two. Like the rectangle mirror panels in the foyer."

The buffet table in the dining area is also a gift from Rhian's Tita Ida. "It looked heavy before. So we changed the wooden doors to frosted glass and updated the knobs."

Rhian clearly inherited her artistic gifts from mom Lay, who also hobbies and sells gourmet tuyo and pasta sauces to friends.

"I want to take up a creative course like fashion design," the 15-year-old actress says. (Displayed in the second floor hallway are framed drawings made by Rhian and older sister Nadine when they were kids.)

Rhian, who recently bagged the Sharon Cuneta role in the afternoon soap "My Only Love," loves tinkering with the clothes she buys off the rack.

"So that it'll look unique, I always have a jacket or dress altered," she says.

That's precisely why living in the suburbs is ideal for her.

"If you need to have clothes modified or if your need to buy groceries, you just go to any of the three nearby malls," she relates. "Everything is within reach, but at the same time it's not a noisy, rowdy place."

Subscribe's career hotting, though.

"If the kids want to have fun, we just throw house parties," she exclaims.

RHIAN and sister Nadine made these kiddie drawings (above), on display in the hallway upstairs.

RHIAN inherited her artistry from mom Lay (right), who decorated the place.

BIG PICTURE windows make the dining area bright and airy.

SHE DOES schoolwork and posts stories on her blog in the computer room/office.

HOW LAY found the Chinese medicine cabinet and wooden boxes in a suburban mall.

RHIAN by the stairway her dad maximizes high ceiling.

CHINESE warrior's theme

ONE OF three couch, which she considers her "perch."

LIVING room's theme of beige, brown and green

ENTERTAINMENT

Streep works with Cruise, Redford in political drama

LOS ANGELES—TOM CRUISE WAS ECSTATIC about working with Meryl Streep and Robert Redford in "Lions for Lambs"—confessing to being in awe in the presence of the two leads in the cinematic "Out of Africa." But Meryl offered an interesting take on what surprised her the most about Tom.

Meryl, considered the great[est] actress of our time, served up praise from for the first time in "Lions," which is also significant for reuniting her and Robert more than 20 years after they did "Out of Africa," the 1985 Oscar Best Picture [Award] winner.

This time though, Robert, while also appearing in the film, is not Meryl's leading man. He is her director in "Lions," which is the first movie to come out of United Artists since Tom Cruise and his producing partner, Paula Wagner, took over the studio last year.

Meryl, second billed for the most Academy Award nominations (14) and the most Golden Globe [wins] in the film categories, [also] plays a TV journalist who is about to be given a [scoop] story by a charismatic senator and presidential hopeful (Tom) in Washington, DC.

In California, a professor (Robert) is trying to reach out to a disillusioned student (Andrew Garfield). Out in Afghanistan, two students (Michael Peña and Derek Luke) who heeded the prof's call to do something important with their lives by enlisting in the military (not quite what the teacher had in mind) are going to be seriously impacted by the senator's bold plan to head off the Taliban.

While actresses complain about ageism in Hollywood, Meryl seems to be busier than ever, more her delectably wicked self in "The Devil Wears Prada." She is also in "Rendition" with Reese Witherspoon and Jake Gyllenhaal. Meryl's upcoming films include adaptations of two stage hits: "Mamma Mia!," where we had the pleasure of watching her sing when we visited the set in London, and "Doubt" (she'll play Sister Aloysius).

This is your first time to work with Tom Cruise. What surprised you most about him?

Tom brought lots of energy, personal power, charm and heart... I remember what they told me at [home school]—you can't play a king. What makes you seem like a king onstage is that everybody else leans down when you come onstage. The atmosphere shifts when Tom enters the set. That really has to do with the way the crew regards him. People in the business regard him as a kind of cinematic ruling power. That is very eloquent to people in our industry. It makes them react in a different way than they do when, let's say, Meryl Streep walks into the set [laughter].

And how was it working with your old friend, Robert Redford, as a director?

With Bob, oh my God, it was really fun to work with him as a director because he understands what we're going through as actors. He's sympathetic. He's not antagonistic in any way. He's collegial. It's just really fun to see him because I haven't seen him in years and years.

But didn't you remain friends since doing "Out of Africa"?

No, we talk on the phone but I haven't really seen him in a long time.

Mr. Redford said that initially, he thought this film would never get [made]. But it made and is also [current] in the first release from the new United Artists.

Somebody has to go out on a limb and I think that UA has done that with a piece that's contentious, controversial and a prod to the conscience. It's a tough thing to make, but and yet, think God they made it. We can say, "Yeah, in 2007, we accurately reflected what was happening. It's a studies of where we are right now."

Since you play a probing TV journalist in the film, let's imagine—if there is one question you could ask Mr. Bush, what would that be?

I would ask if it's so hard to take [or declaring a war or Iraq]. Is shouldn't be that hard. If he doesn't feel he has made a mistake, then there's no question to be asked. But I would ask, "Why is it so difficult? Is he afraid to appear weak? Would a mistake or a misjudgment make him vulnerable to being perceived as weak around the world? What's the problem with acknowledging mistakes?" I think we'd get a long way in the world if that were done. But that's not really a question. That's a statement, isn't it?

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Rahwel U. Naybakat

Is Tom Cruise still a "never [mind]" to you? Can you call yourself a "never [mind]" [anymore]? What do you [think]?

I watch E! [News], MSNBC, Fox and everything until the top of my head blows off [laughter]. We're living in a time when it's our responsibility to keep up with what's going on. And not somethings, keeping up with all the things that are going on is a substitute for acting on what you know. We almost use all the information as a thing to substitute for actually doing something.

Can you comment on certain media organizations supportive of only one side?

There's Fox News that's an absolute editorial voice for one point of view without any restraint about journalistic ethics and [so] more. They don't have to even think about that. They're also in the business of entertainment. A big part of the business is to know who you're selling to and what you're selling. They seem to be selling largely overtly dysfunction products [laughter] but who [can] call yourself a "never [mind]"?

I watch C-SPAN, MSNBC, Fox and everything until the top of my head blows off [laughter]. We're living in a time when it's our responsibility to keep up with what's going on. And not somethings, keeping up with all the things that are going on is a substitute for acting on what you know. We almost use all the information as a thing to substitute for actually doing something.

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STORY ON G2

MALE LEADS. Streep sets opposite Tom Cruise, right, for the first time and reunites with "Out of Africa" costar Robert Redford who also directs this political thriller.

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MOVIE GUIDE
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Off-putting occupations featur

WE CAUGHT THE SECOND rehearsal of "Every Julia" on the Discovery Channel last Monday Oct. 22, and found it an instructive testament to the fan and "sleepover" choices some ostensibly normal teen smokers are prepared to make in order to survive and feed their families.

The first wasn't particularly gripping because it involved mainly coping with the stress and injuries involved in "free-roaming" giant catfish from a muddy river. Hey, there are worse ways to fill your summer...

But the show's second feature was genuinely incomprehensible, involving as it did tucking three-year-old triads from supermarkets. The yucky liquids and solids consuming them (those tanks were an off-putting clue) viewers could practically smell them.

The episode ended with a lesson in a family that raised millions of earthworms for their excrement, which is sold as fertilizer as organic fertilizer.

The earthworms did look cute, but this human couldn't hold a candle in terms of natural...

...ture to septic tank microbes.

So, the Oct. 22 episode wasn't romantic gag reflex inducing. Still, the show did achieve its constant objective of making viewers grateful for the jobs they had, because they weren't as homeless as the fetid companions that the program featured.

Program host and resident "gonzo pig" Killer Bono, won our admiration for jumping into that muddy river, enduring the septic tank sludge, and handling all those wriggling worms. On the other hand, we found that he complained too much, constantly whining about the cockatiel he was being subjected to.

Sure, the work that he was made to do was painful, but all that groaning got to be a drag. Bono should quit his more mundane career to help him get over the drama and insults—after all, he is

Streep w

Printsupp G1

interest. It's individual decisions by individual journalists—whether they're going, or stay in their home. "I just don't want to cover the Portia Fillion-Britney Spencer-Lindsay Lohan (beat). I just don't feel that it's news. I just don't want to do that."

How do you manage to avoid the tabloids and the paparazzi?

I don't know why they don't follow me around (laughter). But I don't really go to many places. If I go to the theater, awards ceremonies or something, people take pictures. But in my life, they don't follow me around.

Why are you are working more than you have in your life?

I really can't explain my employment schedule lately (laughter). I really don't know why that's happening but I am very happy. I do have more time than when everybody was little. But children with husband, sculptor Don Gummer). I just feel lucky. There are more movies about women. There are Meryl with important, interesting and complex parts for women of my age that are given to. It's probably because there may be more women executives who are making those decisions or who are helping to make them.

What are your children going?

My son (Henry) is a musician in Los Angeles. He's working at a gallery to support himself (laughter). Mamie (real name is Mary Willie; Mamie Gummer is her stage name)

red in new TV show

Vampires roam in 30 days of darkness in horror movie starring hot Josh Hartnett

orks...

POWER PLANT CINEMA

HALLOWEEN (R3)	RENDITION (R)	BALLS OF FURY (PG)
LUST CAUTION (NC-17)	STARDUST (PG)	30 DAYS OF NIGHT (R3)

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Mishmash magic

By Oliver H. Pelambuhi
Contributor

MH McGlone, Abdeslam Lahlou, and Frances Conroy in "The Seekers: Brotherly Kindness"

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT HAS BEEN a Pinoy cause for decades, even before the term was popularized in the 1990s. Even before the Philippine Revolution, Filipinos were already fighting for their freedom from Spanish colonial rule. Fast forward to the present, and the struggle continues, albeit in different forms.

In "The Seekers: The Dark is Rising," yet another fantasy novel is translated to the big screen. But to many participants, skills, to a pale amalgamation of characters Harry Potter, Luke Skywalker, and even Frodo. If you see too many similarities, fear the film has enough diverting special effects and interesting situations to keep kids occupied, even amused.

"The Seekers" is barely comprehensible—there is much talk of an ages-old conflict between "Light" and "Dark" forces, and the destiny of an ordinary boy, Young Will (Jonas Armstrong), to be the ultimate weapon in the battle. Instead of getting "signs" from unseen "forefathers" to aid the conflict by some older beings, Will's powers, such as super strength, quickness and time-jumping, become integral to surviving attacks from the sinister Rider (Christopher Eccleston) and his ilk.

Again, passersmay may not enjoy this as much as the younger viewers, who may dig the key characters with extraordinary abilities. Will is a young man with confidence problems, and a distant boss Parker (Logan Lerman) who is his all-time worst enemy. But because he has all these world-changing powers, he makes you want to root for him. Unfortunately, that's not enough. You want to like Will, but he's pretty, silly devoid of any distinct personality and pathos. He's sent to fog, secret missions, and, but we don't worry for him at all.

And that's what "Seekers" seriously lacks. The boy hero is nothing new, but it's not a very good one when this "chosen one" goes through puppy-like (it's hilarious to avoid, and we don't really care for the outcome. Comparisons with other characters are just inevitable, as well. It's like Will is an underpaid Avik and Hogwarts student, minus the prestige and "cool" factor.

Iris McGlone ("Deadwood") and Frances Conroy ("The Six Under") play the heroic mentor and guardian, who relegated to simplistic dialogue and not really explaining in any plausible manner the existence of such warring beings. Just who are these Light and Dark watchers, exactly, and why was Will chosen? Still, if you think too much about it, you'll just find yourself asking more questions, so step while you're ahead.

The boy's inner issues should've been existing, too, but they don't. One such episode is the past wanderers him into a chirak. "Your family loves you." he sheepishly tells his presumed older brother Simon (Kinnaird Smith), who's had recent problems by dropping out of college. That's just so mind-numbingly banal.

"The Seekers" gets lost in today's constantly growing list of fantasy epics, and the flurry of action scenes may be mixed solely as impressionable youngsters. But, however. Overhaps, it should give those young viewers some semblance of empowerment and worth.

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1	2 HALLOWEEN	3 BALLS OF FURY	4 HIDE & SEEK
GLORIETTA 4	1 DADDY DAY CAMP	2 BALLS OF FURY	3? 30 DAYS OF NIGHT	
	4 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL	5 FRIGHTFEST	6 HALLOWEEN	7 RENDITION
GREENBELT 1	1 HALLOWEEN	2 BALLS OF FURY		
	3? 30 DAYS OF NIGHT	3? HALLOWEEN		
GREENBELT 3	3 DADDY DAY CAMP	4 RENDITION	5 BALLS OF FURY	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1? HALLOWEEN	2 30 DAYS OF NIGHT		
	3 BALLS OF FURY	4 STARDUST	5 RENDITION	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 HALLOWEEN	2 HIDE & SEEK	3 KUNG FU FIGHTER	4 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL
MARKET! MARKET!	1 HIDE & SEEK	2 30 DAYS OF NIGHT		
	3 THE 4TH KIND	4 HALLOWEEN	5 BALLS OF FURY	
TRINOMA	1 HIDE & SEEK	2 THE JANUARY	3? 30 DAYS OF NIGHT	4 BALLS OF FURY
	5 PERFUME: THE STORY OF A MURDERER	6 RENDITION	7? HALLOWEEN	

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta — Halloween Treat, Diorella and the Witches of Oz - A Theatrical Musical Theatre Performance, October 30, 9pm to 6pm, Glorietta Activity Center

Greenbelt — Trick or Treat at Greenbelt 3 Park, October 30 to 31 and 31

Alabang Town Center — One Portable Farming Contest, October 30, Town Plaza

Ayala Center Cebu — Glee Product Launch, October 27 to 28, Activity Center

Market! Market! — Sesame Street Party, November 3, Activity Center

Cinderella — Repertory Philippines presents Disney's CINDERELLA Kids, August - December 2007

Ayala Museum — Exhibition: Mark Lewis Rigdon, September 18 to October 31, 2007, Ground Floor

Tri Noma — Sesame Street Party, October 28, Activity Center

Glorietta Greenbelt Alabang Town Center Ayala Center Cebu Trinoma Tri Noma